

**STRENGTHENING U.S. LEADERSHIP IN A
TURBULENT WORLD: THE FY 2017 FOREIGN
AFFAIRS BUDGET**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

FEBRUARY 25, 2016

Serial No. 114-168

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/> or
<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

98-831PDF

WASHINGTON : 2016

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Publishing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512-1800; DC area (202) 512-1800
Fax: (202) 512-2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402-0001

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STRENGTHENING U.S. LEADERSHIP IN A TURBULENT WORLD: THE FY 2017 FOREIGN AFFAIRS BUDGET

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2016

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Edward Royce (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ROYCE. This hearing will come to order.

This morning the committee once again welcomes Secretary of State John Kerry to consider the department's budget request.

When Secretary Kerry last appeared before us, he was presenting the Obama administration's nuclear agreement with Iran. In the 7 months since, the administration got its agreement and the Middle East has been transformed, and not for the better. Now, with access to \$100 billion in unfrozen assets and sanctions wiped away, Iran has instantly become the dominant country in the region. The Revolutionary Guards, already Iran's "most powerful economic actor," in the words of the Treasury Department, will only grow more powerful with international investment.

The committee has deep concerns about the way the Obama administration—in apparent deference to Tehran—has chosen to ignore portions of a new bipartisan law ending visa waiver travel for those who have visited Iran. And, Mr. Secretary, the committee still awaits a detailed response to its many questions about a surprise \$1.7 billion payment to the Iranian regime that coincided with the release of several Americans.

Look no further than Syria for the horrible consequences of an emboldened Iran. The slaughter continues, and while the Secretary does his best to broker some sort of ceasefire, the fact remains that Russia, Iran, and Assad are calling the shots on the ground. The administration says there is no military solution to the conflict in Syria, yet as far as Putin and Assad see it, there very much is.

Of course, Russia's backing of Assad means that ISIS only grows elsewhere. The ISIS "JV team" has gone global, capable of striking in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, and here at home. Some 50 ISIS-linked groups have carried out attacks in over 20 countries. In the failed state of Libya, ISIS has doubled in size. Now it has 6,000 fighters in Libya. Every day that ISIS advances, it draws recruits to plot new attacks abroad. The committee hopes to understand

just what is the department's strategy to counter violent extremism?

Looking toward Asia, the committee met yesterday with the Chinese Foreign Minister and reminded him that the South China Sea must remain open to international shipping and that any disputes should be resolved peacefully. Even after the latest North Korean nuclear test, Chinese pressure on the regime in North Korea is weak. Fortunately, the President just signed into law this committee's North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act. It is now up to the President to enforce this law aggressively to cut off the funds now flowing to the Kim regime in North Korea.

After years of congressional pressing, this budget does acknowledge the need to respond to Russia's "weaponization of information" and to ISIS propaganda. But the Broadcasting Board of Governors—the international broadcasting agency that your predecessor called "defunct"—remains in desperate need of an overhaul. Mr. Secretary, working together, we can, we must, fix this.

Facing a chronic budget deficit, even good programs may not be supportable at levels we'd like and that's why I'm proud that this committee's scrutiny of the department's new diplomatic security training facility helped to save the taxpayers over \$500 million.

I now recognize the ranking member, Mr. Engel of New York, for any opening comments he may have.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Secretary, as always, welcome to our committee.

We work very hard on this committee to make and keep it the most bipartisan committee in Congress because, when it comes to foreign policy, our differences really should stop at the water's edge.

So I want to thank you for your distinguished service to our country. I know that you sat on this side of the dais long enough to understand Congress' important role in foreign policy, and we're grateful for everything you do.

I will get into a few specifics, but even if we all listed our top ten foreign policy priorities, we would just be scratching the surface. I can never remember a time when so much was happening, all at the same time, all at once.

If you threw a dart at a map of the world, wherever it lands, you'd find an American foreign policy interest. It might not be a top priority today because we focus mostly on the fires already burning out of control.

But what happens if we don't provide resources in sub-Saharan Africa to help consolidate democratic gains? What happens to the Asia rebalance if we neglect U.S.-India security cooperation?

What happens if we say tackling climate change and protecting the environment just need to wait?

The issues we ignore today will be the fires burning out of control tomorrow, and one thing is certain. Stopping an ongoing crisis is a much costlier business than preventing one—in terms of American dollars and often American lives.

So, we need a robust foreign policy. We need to invest in diplomacy, development, and foreign assistance in order to tackle all of these challenges.

We need to make the case that modest investments today, just over 1 percent of the Federal budget, will pay back huge dividends for our security and prosperity tomorrow. We need to show that American leadership is always a sure thing because if we're not doing this work around the world, no one else will.

So let me turn to a few particulars. I know and you know, Mr. Secretary, that we must continue to hold Iran's feet to the fire, and we must make sure that they adhere to the agreement—to the letter of the law.

I'm glad the administration imposed new sanctions following Iran's ballistic missile test.

We need to continue making sure Iran, again, is following its nuclear deal obligations to the letter. We also need to crack down on Iran's other destructive behavior.

Iran continues stirring up trouble throughout the region, sending IRGC commanders to Syria, supporting the Houthis in Yemen, spreading instability in Lebanon, and being the main supporter of Hezbollah.

We need to do what it takes to curb Iran's ongoing mischief and support our allies and partners in the region, especially the state of Israel, which Iran poses an existential threat to.

In Syria, even with the planned ceasefire, I don't foresee a quick end to the crisis, especially now that Russia has provided Assad another lifeline.

The millions of refugees and displaced families desperately need humanitarian assistance, and we should support the administration's \$4.1 billion request.

But food and supplies won't end this conflict. We need to push for a political resolution to get Assad out of power and help the Syrian people start rebuilding.

We also need a new AUMF giving the President what he needs to defeat ISIS, while preventing another large-scale open ended commitment of American troops on the ground.

Turning to Ukraine, as fighting again intensifies, we cannot take our eye off the ball. Today, Ukraine's top priority should be rooting out corruption and pushing reform, and we need to support these efforts.

We need to work with the Ukraine. We need to be a partner of Ukraine. A stronger, more prosperous Ukraine stands a better chance of turning Putin back.

And speaking of Putin, we need to let him know that we will never acquiesce to his illegal occupation of Crimea, and his aggression in Ukraine will not be tolerated.

So that's why I'm glad we're doing the right thing by bolstering NATO in Eastern Europe to deter further Russian aggression. Any talk of sanctions relief for Russia is premature so long as Ukraine doesn't control its own eastern border.

But, Mr. Secretary, we must do more to counter Russian propaganda. The chairman and I feel very strongly about the fact that people who speak Russian sometimes only hear on air what Putin wants them to hear. They get a very unbalanced view, and we need to make sure that they get a balanced view.

Here in our neighborhood, let me applaud President Obama for what he has done over the last year. We should support the President's billion-dollar request for Central America.

If we get to the root causes of child migration from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, fewer children will attempt the dangerous trip. Our top ally in the region, Colombia, is nearing a historic peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—the FARC.

Just as we have supported Colombia throughout this conflict, we should continue standing with Colombia's people and government as they build a peaceful future.

Turning to Argentina, the new government's desire to work more closely with the U.S. is a good sign. Chairman Royce and I have urged the President to prioritize this relationship, and I'm glad that the President is traveling there next month.

Our policy in the Americas brings me finally to global health. The Zika virus may soon touch nearly every country in the hemisphere, and the connection between Zika and the birth defect microcephaly creates even greater urgency.

We should prioritize awareness efforts, including the risk of sexual transmission, and meet the needs for contraception. Women need the right tools and information to choose whether and when to have children, particularly with this virus running wild.

More generally, we continue to see the importance of investing in global health. The President's budget request is strong, but we should focus on the right priorities. For example, tuberculosis is the world's number-one infectious killer. So, I don't understand why the funding request from last year hasn't gone up.

So Mr. Secretary, I could go on and on, but I look forward to hearing from you on these and other concerns. Again, thank you, and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Engel.

So this morning we are pleased to be joined by Mr. John Kerry, the 68th Secretary of State. Prior to his appointment, the Secretary served as a United States Senator from Massachusetts for 28 years and chaired the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for the last 4 years.

And so, Mr. Secretary, welcome again. Without objection, the witness' full prepared statement will be made part of the record. Members here will have 5 calendar days to submit any statements or questions or any other material for the record.

We want as many members as possible to have a chance to question the Secretary, and to accomplish that I would just ask every member and the witness, let's try to stick to the time limit. That means leaving an adequate amount of time for the Secretary to answer your questions.

So if we ask our questions succinctly and we get a succinct response, we can get through the members of the committee, and with that we will begin with a summary of, Mr. Secretary, your testimony.

Thank you again.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN F. KERRY,
SECRETARY OF STATE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Secretary KERRY. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Ranking Member Engel, all the members of the committee.

I'm privileged to be here, to have a chance to present the 2017 budget and to answer your questions and, obviously, I know most of them will be more with respect to policy, et cetera.

But I will try to be very rapid in this opening. First, our request for resources this year of \$50 billion is equal, as Ranking Member Engel reminded everybody, to about 1 percent of the entire Federal budget.

One penny on the dollar is everything we do with respect to diplomatic security, development security, relationship security—all of the things we do with our Embassies, AID, everything.

And I would suggest very respectfully to members of this committee it is a minimum price for the leadership that we offer to the world, that we are currently engaged.

I think as the chairman said, I can't remember a time where there are as many hot spots, as many difficult challenges because of the transformation taking in the world right now—taking place and as a result we are engaged in more places simultaneously than at any time that I can remember in my public life.

The scope of that engagement is, frankly, essential to protect the interests of our country, to project our values and to provide for the security of the United States.

We're confronted today by perils that are as old as nationalist aggression, state actions and as new as cyber warfare, and nonstate actors who are the principal protagonists in today's conflicts as well as dictators in too many places who run roughshod over global international norms and also by violent extremists who combine modern media techniques with medieval thinking in order to wage war on civilization itself.

And despite the dangers, I come to you unabashedly ready to say that we Americans, I think, have many and profound reasons for confidence.

In recent years, our economy has added more jobs than all of the rest of the industrial world combined. Our military, our armed forces, are second to none. My friends, it's not even close.

Our alliances in Europe and Asia are vigilant and strong and growing stronger with the TPP and with the rebalance and our citizens are, frankly, unmatched with any country in the world in their generosity and their commitment to humanitarian causes to civil society and to freedom.

We hear a lot of verbal hand wringing today but I, for one, will tell you that despite my deep respect and affection for my colleagues that I have worked with these last 3 years plus, I wouldn't switch places with one Foreign Minister in the world.

And I certainly don't want to see the United States retreat to some illusionary golden age, given the conflicts and the challenges that we face in the world today and the need to project our values and protect our interests and build the security of our nation.

So I, frankly, think that here and now we have enormous opportunities that we are seizing. In the past year, with great debate here, obviously, and many people who chose to oppose it, we

reached an historic multilateral accord—multilateral accord, P5+1, and the world with Iran that has cut off that country's pathways to a nuclear weapon and it has made the world safer because they no longer have the fissile material or the capacity to build that bomb.

In Paris in December we joined governments from more than 190 nations. That's not insignificant that 190 nations agreed on specific steps—a comprehensive agreement to curb greenhouse gas emissions and limit the most harmful consequences of climate change that we are witnessing to a greater degree every single day.

Witness the drought in California, the increased flooding, the increased numbers of fires, the intensity of storms, the fact that we spent about \$8 billion in response to the intensity of those storms over the course of the last year alone compared to the minimal cost that we are asking you to provide for the Global Green Climate Fund.

In addition, we signed the Trans-Pacific Partnership which will ensure a level playing field for American businesses and workers. It will reassert United States leadership in a region that is vital to our interests.

In northern and eastern Europe we are quadrupling support for our security reassurance initiative, giving Russia a very clear choice between continued sanctions and meeting its obligations to a sovereign and democratic Ukraine.

In our hemisphere, we are helping Colombia to end the globe's longest running civil conflict. Though there are still hurdles in that effort, we are working at it.

We're aiding our partners in Central America to implement reforms that will reduce the pressure for illegal migration.

In Asia, we're standing with our allies in opposition to the threats posed by a belligerent North Korea and we're helping Afghanistan and Pakistan to counter violent extremism and we are encouraging resolution of competing maritime claims in the South China Sea.

With friends in fast-growing Africa, we have embarked on specific initiatives to combat hunger, to promote health, to empower women, to fight back against such terrorist groups as al-Shabaab and Boko Haram.

And, of course, the administration recognizes that the threat posed by violent extremism extends far beyond any one region and will not be addressed simply by military means. So the approach we have adopted is a comprehensive and a long-term one. Diplomatically, we are striving to end conflicts that fuel extremism such as those in Libya and Yemen and we also work with partners to more broadly share intelligence, and as everybody here knows, we have forged a 66-nation coalition to counter Daesh and we will defeat Daesh.

I have no question about that. We just moved with troops that we support on Ramadi. We are making enormous progress there.

We have, together with the enormous efforts of the Iraqi military, now liberated 40 percent of the territory that was held by Daesh. We're moving on Hit. We will eventually move on Mosul.

We have cut off the road of access to Araka and Mosul and there are many other things happening that we can discuss in the course of the morning.

We're assisting the government in Baghdad as it seeks to professionalize its security forces and through the international Syria support group, which we formed and put together, we have helped design a plan that has resulted in the delivery of a possible cessation of hostilities to take place on Saturday.

We have a team that will be working in Geneva and another team working in the next couple days directly with the co-chairs—the Russians—in an effort to try to encourage that process to take hold.

I will say that for the first time in years five or six communities have received some 114 trucks of humanitarian assistance and some 80,000 people now have supplies for a month that didn't have it a week ago before we were able to seal that agreement.

And my hope is, though I know it's very difficult—no illusions about it—my hope is that we can work out a modality in the next few days that will see this actually take hold.

We're calling on every eligible party to join in this effort and we can talk more, obviously, in the course of the morning about our vision for the political settlement itself.

So I just close by saying, Mr. Chairman, as everybody knows this is the last budget of the Obama administration, the last one we will submit to this committee on behalf of American foreign policy and the national security of our country.

There is nothing that I, as Secretary, or personally as a citizen take more seriously than protecting the security of our country.

I ask for the fair consideration, for your counsel, your advice, your support and backing for this budget and our initiatives.

But above all, I just want to say thank you to all of you for the extraordinary privilege of being able to work with you in support of an agenda that I believe not only reflects the best hopes and values of our country.

But I am convinced when you analyse the challenges of the world today I believe this budget also reflects the best hopes of the world and that's what America's leadership is all about.

So I thank you and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Kerry follows:]

Prepared Written Testimony
Secretary of State John Kerry Before the House Committee on Foreign
Affairs
Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Request – State Department and Related Agencies
February 25, 2016

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I appreciate the chance to testify on behalf of the administration's budget request for the State Department and related agencies for Fiscal Year 2017.

Our request this year is roughly level with last year's – right around fifty billion dollars. That amount, though substantial, is equal to only about one percent of the federal budget. We seek these resources to sustain America's international engagement, which is deeper and more wide-ranging today than ever before in our history.

The unprecedented scope of our leadership is warranted by the mix of opportunities and challenges we face. We are confronted by dangers as old as excessive nationalism and as new as cyber warfare, by dictators who run roughshod over international norms, by failing and fragile states, by infectious disease and by violent extremists who combine modern media with medieval thinking to murder, enslave, and wage war on civilization itself.

In the face of such challenges, the United States and its citizens remain firmly committed to the pursuit of international peace, prosperity, and the rule of law. The administration's Fiscal Year 2017 budget request embodies every aspect of that commitment. It is a reflection of our country's wide-ranging interests, of what we are against -- and most important -- what we are for.

There's a reason why most people in most places still turn to the United States when important work needs to be done. It's not because anyone expects or wants us to shoulder the full burden -- but because we can be counted on to lead in the right direction and toward the right goals.

Make no mistake, we live at a moment filled with peril and complexity, but we Americans also have ample grounds for confidence. In recent years, our economy has added more jobs than the rest of the industrialized world combined. Our armed forces are by far the world's strongest and best. Our alliances in Europe and Asia are energized. We have reached historic multilateral accords on Iran's nuclear program, climate change, and trans-Pacific trade. We have witnessed important democratic gains in, among other places, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, and Burma. We helped facilitate what we hope will be a landmark peace agreement in Colombia. We have enhanced our position throughout the hemisphere by resuming diplomatic relations with Cuba. We

marshalled a global campaign to save lives by containing the Ebola virus; and we are the leader in championing the empowerment of women and respect for the full range of internationally recognized human rights. We have also taken the lead in mobilizing international solidarity in the fight against such terrorist groups as Daesh, al-Qa'ida, Boko Haram, and al-Shabab – groups that have absolutely nothing to offer anyone except destruction and death.

From the vantage point of America's national security, we begin 2016 with a long agenda focused on key priorities but understanding the potential for emergencies to arise at any moment. We think it essential to make full use of every available foreign policy tool -- from carrots to coercion -- but with an emphasis on persuading governments overseas not just to *do* what we want, but to *want* what we want. We will act alone when we must, but with allies, partners and friends when possible on every continent and in every situation where our interests are at risk. We will respond to immediate needs, but with long term requirements in mind. And we will always be conscious that the State Department's principal responsibility is not to interpret and justify foreign perspectives to the United States, but to defend and advance America's well-being in a fast-changing world.

I will turn now to the specifics of the administration's budget request for the coming fiscal year.

The funding we seek is in two parts; the first consists of a base amount of \$35.2 billion. These resources will deepen cooperation with our allies and regional partners and bolster American leadership at the UN and other multilateral organizations. They will protect U.S. diplomatic personnel, platforms, and information, while also helping us to mitigate the harmful consequences of climate change, promote human rights, combat trafficking in persons, and continue valuable educational exchanges. Worldwide, they will furnish life-saving humanitarian assistance, foster growth, reduce poverty, increase access to education, combat disease, and promote democratic governance and the rule of law.

The Overseas Contingency Operations portion of our budget is \$14.9 billion and will improve our ability to prevent, respond to, and recover from crises abroad; contribute to new and ongoing peacekeeping and UN special political missions; help allies and partners such as Afghanistan and Pakistan counter threats; step up our efforts to counter terrorist organizations; and sustain security programs and embassy construction at high risk posts.

The number one goal of U.S. foreign policy is to keep Americans safe. To that end, this year's budget seeks resources to enhance our nation's leadership of the 65-member global coalition to degrade and destroy the terrorist group Daesh. Our strategy is to combine our power -- and the

power of our partners -- to degrade Daesh's command structure, shrink the territory under its control, curb its financing, hammer its economic assets, discredit its lies, slow its recruitment, and block any attempt to expand its networks. As President Obama has made clear, the murderous conduct that Daesh is trying to foment must be opposed with unity, strength, and a determination on our part to persist until we prevail. That determination has several dimensions:

- Militarily, we are intensifying pressure through coalition air strikes backed by local partners on the ground, a stepped-up training and supply effort, the deployment of Special Forces advisers, improved targeting, the systematic disruption of enemy supply lines, and coordinated planning of future actions.
- To consolidate the important territorial gains made thus far, we are stressing the importance of stabilizing communities freed from Daesh in Syria and Iraq.
- We are helping the government in Baghdad as it seeks to broaden and professionalize its security forces and to liberate portions of the country still occupied by Daesh.
- We continue to strengthen our regional partners, including Jordan and Lebanon, and to provide humanitarian assistance to people impacted by the conflict inside Syria, in neighboring countries, and beyond.
- We are supporting a broad-based diplomatic initiative, chaired by UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura, and aimed at achieving a political solution to the Syrian civil war that will de-escalate the conflict, isolate the terrorists, provide for a transition in governance, and make possible the kind of peaceful, inclusive, pluralist, and fully sovereign country that most Syrians want. To that end, on February 11, we announced a plan to ensure access to humanitarian supplies for all Syrians in need, and to arrange a cessation of hostilities that we hope will evolve into a durable and nationwide ceasefire. The full and good faith implementation of these measures – to ensure humanitarian access and end violence against civilians in Syria – is a top foreign policy priority of the United States.
- Finally, we believe it essential that America speak with a single voice in its resolve to defeat Daesh. Congressional approval of a new and more specific authorization to use military force against that terrorist organization would be welcomed by the administration and help to demonstrate our unity and commitment.

In the seventeen months since the Counter-Daesh coalition was formed, its aircraft have launched more than 10,000 air strikes. The combination of air support and ground assaults by local partners has reversed Daesh's momentum; driven the terrorists from such key cities as Kobani, Tikrit, and Ramadi; and weakened their position on the Syria-Turkish border. All told,

Daesh has been forced to abandon almost a third of the populated territory it had previously controlled in these countries, and many of their fighters -- faced by a deep cut in wages and no new towns to plunder -- have either deserted or been executed trying to escape.

The threat posed by violent extremism extends far beyond the Middle East and the particular dangers spawned by Daesh. Those threats cannot effectively be addressed solely -- or even primarily -- by military means. Our approach, therefore, is comprehensive, long term, and designed to enhance the capacity of countries and communities to defeat terrorist groups and prevent new ones from arising. To that end, our new Center for Global Engagement is helping partner nations to promote better governance, strengthen democratic institutions, expand access to a quality education, and foster development, especially in the most vulnerable parts of the world. On the diplomatic side, we are striving with the UN and our allies to solidify a new Government of National Accord in Libya, and to bring an end to the violence and political unrest that has plagued Yemen.

Last year, with our P5+1 partners, we negotiated the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, cutting off each of Iran's potential pathways to a nuclear weapons capability, requiring it to take thousands of centrifuges offline, pour concrete into the core of its heavy water reactor, and ship abroad 98 percent of its stockpile of enriched uranium. Because of these steps and the rigorous inspection and verification measures to which Tehran has also agreed, the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran has receded, our allies are safer, and so are we. In months to come, we will continue our close consultations with Congress as we monitor Iran's compliance with the Joint Plan, and as we stand with our allies and friends against Iran's destabilizing policies and actions in the region.

In part because of the challenges posed by Iran and other threats, we continue to engage in a record level of military, intelligence, and security cooperation with Israel. We remain committed to helping our ally confront its complex security environment and to ensure its qualitative military edge. Each day, we work with Israel to enforce sanctions and prevent terrorist organizations such as Hamas and Hizballah from obtaining the financing and weapons they seek. Since 2009, we have provided more than \$23 billion in foreign military financing to Israel, which constitutes the majority of what we have given to nations worldwide. Diplomatically, our support for Israel also remains rock solid as we continue to oppose efforts to delegitimize the Jewish state or to pass biased resolutions against it in international bodies.

The Transatlantic partnership remains a cornerstone of American security and prosperity. We are in constant communication with our NATO and EU Allies and partners about a vast array of issues, including our steadfast backing for a democratic Ukraine, full implementation by every side of the Minsk protocols, and an increase in European Reassurance Initiative funding that will

support the persistent presence of a brigade's combat team for 12 months out of the year and allow us to preposition warfighting equipment for a division headquarters and other enablers in Europe. This year's budget includes \$953 million to enhance stability, prosperity, energy independence, and good governance in Ukraine and other partner countries facing direct pressure from Russia, in addition to fighting HIV/AIDS and countering violent extremism in the region.

Closer to home, the Fiscal Year 2017 budget will continue our investment in Central America to fight corruption and crime and to attack the root economic causes of illegal migration to the United States, including by unaccompanied minors. Our Strategy for Engagement in Central America, with its whole-of-government approach, emphasis on building effective and accountable institutions and leveraging of private capital, will make it easier for our regional neighbors to live securely and with steadily increasing prosperity in their own countries.

In addition, we are supporting Colombia as it seeks to finalize an agreement that will end the world's longest ongoing civil conflict. During President Santos's visit to Washington earlier this month, President Obama announced his intention to seek support for "Peace Colombia," a successor to Plan Colombia that will spur recovery in communities ravaged by the many years of fighting. This project will highlight assistance to the victims of conflict, and aid in reinforcing security gains, clearing mines, demobilizing rebel fighters, and curbing trade in illegal narcotics. Our citizens may be proud that, in his remarks at the White House, President Santos attributed many of his country's advances "to the fact that 15 years ago, when we were in serious straits, the Colombians received a friendly hand. That friendly hand came from here in Washington, from both sides of the aisle, Democrats and Republicans."

In Cuba, we have resumed diplomatic relations after 54 years. Although we continue to have sharp differences with the government in Havana regarding human rights, political prisoners, and other issues; we remain determined to support the aspirations of the Cuban people to plug into the global economy and live in greater freedom. We call on Cuban authorities to remove obstacles to participation by their citizens online and in commercial enterprises; and we urge Congress to lift the economic embargo, which has for decades been used as an excuse by the Castro regime to dodge blame for its own ill-advised policies.

As evidenced by last week's ASEAN Summit hosted by President Obama at Sunnylands in California, the United States is an indispensable contributor to stability, prosperity, and peace in the Asia Pacific. Dangers in that region include North Korea's provocative nuclear and ballistic missile programs and tensions stemming from contested maritime claims in the South China Sea. United States policy is to encourage security cooperation and dialogue aimed at building confidence and ensuring that disputes are settled in keeping with international obligations and law. Our modernizing alliances with Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, and the Philippines -- in addition to our partnership with New Zealand and close ties with ASEAN --

provide a firm foundation for our strategy, as does our multi-dimensional relationship with China. Our diplomatic priorities include support for human rights and the continued evolution of an open and democratic political process in Burma, where a freely-elected parliament has been seated for the first time, and where we have called for an end to discrimination and violence directed at the Rohingya Muslim minority.

Our FY 2017 budget includes \$1.25 billion in assistance to the national unity government of Afghanistan to strengthen its institutions, bolster its security capabilities, repel attacks by violent extremists, implement economic reforms, preserve gains made over the last decade (including for women and girls), and move forward with a wide range of social programs. We are requesting \$742 million in aid to Pakistan to support its citizens as they seek security, build democracy and sustain economic growth and development – even as the country continues to suffer from terrorist attacks. Last October, I traveled to every state in Central Asia to reaffirm America’s friendship with the people in that part of the world and to discuss shared concerns in such areas as security, energy policy, development, and human rights. Also in 2015, we strongly endorsed democratic progress in Sri Lanka, while elevating our important strategic dialogue with India to include a commercial component, reflecting the five-fold increase in bilateral trade over the last decade.

In Africa, our budget request reflects our emphasis on partnership—with civil society, with the private sector and with key allies. Our request of \$7.1 billion will support democratic institutions, spur growth, promote gender equity, and protect human rights through such mechanisms as the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, the Feed the Future initiative, Power Africa, and the President’s “Stand with Civil Society Initiative.” Our assistance also undergirds regional stability through the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership, the Security Governance Initiative, and strategically important international peace operations in, among other countries, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, South Sudan, Sudan, and Somalia. Diplomatically, the United States continues to work closely with regional leaders to prevent crises – whether caused by outbreaks of disease, the threat of famine, or political controversy, as has recently been the cause of urgent concern in Burundi.

American leadership is on display and making a positive difference in every part of the world including the far north, where the United States last year assumed chairmanship of the Arctic Council, a platform we are using to forge united action on the environment, fisheries conservation, and economic opportunity for local populations. But in addition to bilateral and regional issues, the United States is at the forefront of a host of efforts that address global challenges and uphold universal ideals.

For example, the administration's FY 2017 budget request reaffirms our country's premier role in the world economy. Each day, the men and women in our embassies and consulates work closely with representatives of the American private sector to identify new markets for our goods and services, ensure fair competition for foreign contracts, protect intellectual property, and advocate for U.S. interests under the law. This budget will advance U.S. engagement on global information and communications technology policy, encourage innovation, and protect the interests of our citizens in Internet freedom and digital privacy. Through our contributions to international financial institutions like the World Bank, we help to lift the economies of low-income countries and expand the global middle class.

With the Trade Representative and others in the administration, the State Department works to conclude forward-looking agreements such as the recently signed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) to ensure a level playing field for American businesses and workers and raise labor and environmental standards. The TPP is a landmark twelve nation pact that will lower trade barriers and advance American leadership in the Asia Pacific region, ensuring that the rules of the road for trade in this critical region are written by the United States and our partners, rather than others who do not share our interests and values. In asking Congress to approve the agreement, President Obama has pointed out that the TPP will cut 18,000 taxes on products that are made in America, boost U.S. exports, and support high-paying jobs, and he has expressed his interest in working closely with Congress to get the agreement approved as soon as possible. We are also working with USTR to pursue a similar high-standard approach to trade with Europe in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, which is still being negotiated.

In Paris last December, the United States joined governments from more than 190 nations in approving a comprehensive agreement to curb greenhouse gas emissions and limit the most harmful consequences of climate change. This historic pact represents the first time the world has declared that all countries have a responsibility to join in what must truly be a global commitment – through arrangements marked by transparency, a mandatory standard of review, and the flexibility a framework for successive and ambitious nationally determined climate targets. Our budget request of \$983.9 million for the Global Climate Change Initiative and includes \$500 million for the Green Climate Fund, which will help low income countries leverage public and private financing to reduce carbon pollution and bolster resilience to climate change.

Our request for Fiscal Year 2017 allocates \$4.7 billion for assessed dues and voluntary contributions to international organizations and peacekeeping efforts and to help other countries participate in such missions. The request includes contingency funding for new or expanded peace operations that may emerge outside the regular budget cycle. Tragically, the demand for peacekeeping assistance remains at an all-time high; and the United States neither can, nor should, take the lead in most cases. It serves both our interests and our values when UN agencies and regional organizations are able -- with our encouragement and support -- to quell violence,

shield civilians from harm, promote reconciliation among rival groups, and ensure that women are fairly represented in all aspects of peacemaking and recovery projects.

In FY 2017, we are requesting \$8.6 billion for bilateral and multilateral health programs. These funds support the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR); the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, & Malaria; Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and other critical maternal and child health programs; the Global Health Security Agenda; and an intensified campaign, launched by the White House, to end the scourge of malaria. We have also sought emergency funding to aid in an international effort to minimize the public health threat posed by the Zika virus.

This year, we are asking for \$6.2 billion to address humanitarian imperatives, including support for internally displaced persons, refugees, those affected by conflict or natural hazards and communities working to increase preparedness and resilience to disasters.

To date, with backing from Congress, the United States has provided over \$4.5 billion in humanitarian assistance -- more than any other country -- to assist victims of the catastrophic civil war in Syria. In London, earlier this month, I announced a further pledge of \$600 million in humanitarian aid as well as \$325 million in development funds that includes support for the education of 300,000 refugee youth in Jordan and Lebanon. In September, at the UN, President Obama will host a summit on the global refugee crisis. This will be the culmination of a vigorous diplomatic effort to rally the world community to increase the global response to humanitarian funding appeals by at least 30 percent, and to add significantly to the number of countries that donate regularly to these appeals or that are willing to accept refugees for admission within their borders.

Our budget request allocates \$2.7 billion for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance -- a modest amount compared to the steep costs of the civil strife and political extremism that often thrive in the absence of effective and democratic governing institutions. Programs carried out by the State Department and USAID can play a pivotal role in enabling countries to make governance more accountable, electoral systems more professional, and judicial systems more independent. By supporting civil society and the rule of law, these programs contribute to a range of important goals, among them freedom of speech, religion and the press; respect for the rights of persons with disabilities; equitable treatment for members of the LGBTQ community; and an end to human trafficking.

In addition, I am pleased to announce that the administration, led by the Department of State and in cooperation with USAID, the Peace Corps, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, will soon launch a strategy to advance the empowerment of adolescent girls. This strategy will be holistic in nature and address key issues facing adolescent girls today, including equal access to secondary education and cultural practices that deny girls a fair chance to participate in the economic and political life of their societies. Our budget also underscores the State

Department's decades-long commitment to scholarship programs and educational exchanges that help Americans to learn about the world and young leaders from around the world to learn about America. Meanwhile, our energetic and innovative activities in the field of public diplomacy are essential to convey the truth about U.S. policies and actions at a time when some – including terrorist organizations – lie continually about what Americans believe and do.

To achieve our country's international objectives, we must give State Department and USAID employees the tools and resources they need to do their jobs well. That's why our request includes a \$169 million net increase for Diplomatic and Consular Programs, reflecting heightened requirements in such areas as Freedom of Information Act processing, cyber security, counterterrorism, intelligence, and research. This proposal will support increased diversity through expanded recruitment and fellowship opportunities, and will provide more competitive wages for the locally employed personnel who make up the majority of our overseas workforce. I also ask you to support the restoration of full Overseas Comparability Pay for State Department personnel who are deployed abroad. This reform is essential to our effort to retain highly-skilled individuals in a competitive international jobs market, and to ensure fair treatment for those serving our country in relatively high-risk locations. The Budget also includes a \$122 million increase for USAID's Operating Expense account to maintain the Agency's workforce and sustain on-going global operations to meet foreign policy objectives, implement Presidential initiatives, and expand global engagement.

Finally, we are asking \$3.7 billion to ensure the security of our diplomatic platforms, protect our IT network and infrastructure, meet special medical needs at select posts, and carry out emergency planning and preparedness. Our \$2.4 billion request for diplomatic facility construction and maintenance will be used for repairs at our overseas assets, and to continue implementing the security recommendations of the Benghazi Accountability Review Board.

My colleagues, a little more than a quarter century ago, when the Berlin Wall fell, there were those who suggested that we Americans could now relax because our core ideas had prevailed and our enemy had been defeated. But we have long since learned that although the particular demands on our leadership may vary from one decade to the next; our overall responsibilities neither vanish nor diminish.

The challenge for today's generation is to forge a new security framework that will keep our country strong and our people safe. We are under no illusions about how difficult that task is. We face determined adversaries and many governments whose priorities do not match our own. The old plagues of excessive nationalism and tribalism retain their grip in many regions. Technology is a two-edged sword, simultaneously bringing the world closer and driving it apart.

Non-state actors have arisen, often for the best, but others are at war with all we have ever stood for -- and with the modern world itself.

In this complex environment, some setbacks are inevitable. Persistent and creative engagement will be required on all fronts. But we are guided by the same values and supported by the same democratic institutions that enabled our predecessors to succeed. We are bolstered by a citizenry that is earning respect for our country every day through its contributions to technological innovation and global prosperity; through its activism on behalf of humanitarian causes and civil society; through its brave service on the battlefield, in air and on sea; and through its commitment to a system of governance that will allow our country this year to elect a president -- peacefully and fairly -- for the 58th time. We are sustained, as well, by one of the true touchstones of America's greatness -- the willingness on the part of Congress and the Executive branch to work together for the common good.

Thank you, and now I would be pleased to respond to your questions.

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Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

We're going to move as quickly as possible, keeping all members to 5 minutes so we can get to as many members here as we possibly can.

Let me start with the observation that since just last month, Mr. Secretary, we've seen major foreign economic developments in terms of investment in Iran—\$20 billion on the part of Airbus, \$½ billion to modernize a car factory from Peugeot.

We see French and Italian energy companies investing billions to revive the oil and gas infrastructure.

These companies are government backed, many of them, and we have Chinese and we have Russian investment. In the face of this flood, isn't snap back really just an empty threat?

Hasn't the dam broken?

Secretary KERRY. Not at all, Congressman—Mr. Chairman. Not in the least.

Every country that you've just mentioned—China, Russia, France, Britain, Germany—are all agreed and signed up to and have voted for a United Nations resolution that says snap back will take effect if Iran were to engage in egregious, unsolvable violation of the JCPOA.

But in the meantime, Mr. Chairman, they are going to do what they are permitted to do under the agreement which is do business in terms of Iran and hopefully those links will ultimately result in transformation to some degree.

Now, I would ask all of you to ask a question. Why isn't it Boeing? Why isn't it General Motors? I sat next to the chairman of General Motors the other day in Davos, Switzerland. They're sitting there watching Peugeot go in and others.

We can't do that. Why? Because we still have a sanctions regime against Iran on our embargo because of our other issues.

Chairman ROYCE. Because of ballistic missiles and because of their support for terrorism.

Secretary KERRY. Because of other—that's correct, Mr. Chairman.

But we can't sit here and complain about other people doing what they're allowed to do when we ourselves prevent ourselves from doing certain things.

Chairman ROYCE. But the major economic actor from the standpoint of members of this committee or many of us is the IRGC—is the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps—and we see them on the march.

We see them in violation of another U.N. sanction, not only working on their ICBM programs but also carrying out terrorist activity. So given the stock you're putting in the snap back provision are you asking Congress to renew the Iran Sanctions Act? Because that's going to expire. That's going to expire at the end of this year. This is the foundation of the sanctions regime. If it expires there is nothing to snap back.

Secretary KERRY. That's not accurate, Mr. Chairman.

We have all the snap back power that we need without the ISA. I'm not saying, you know, not to do it but I wouldn't advise that right now for a number of reasons.

We just announced implementation day. Whatever we do with respect to the Iran Sanctions Act, my colleagues, friends, should be really done in the light of what we know is happening or not happening in the context of implementation and Iran's behavior going forward.

Now, it's too early to measure all of that. Everybody here knows we can pass the Iran Sanctions Act if we needed to because of Iran's behavior in 10 minutes in each house—in the Senate and in the House.

There is no rush here, number one. Number two, the President has all the power in the world through the Emergency Economic Powers Act to be able to implement. That's what we did to implement many of the sanctions we've put in place. The executive orders are empowered under that and the power of the presidency, not, you know—

Chairman ROYCE. Let me close, though, with an observation.

Secretary KERRY. They're not dependent—they're not dependent on the ISA. That is my point.

Chairman ROYCE. I understand that point. But when you say there's no rush here let me point that in terms of the Iranian behavior there is very much a rush toward the mass production of an ICBM program and we're witnessing this.

There is a rush on their part. There was a rush into Yemen with militia. There was a rush into Syria with Quds Forces and with proxies from Iran.

It is that that we're seeing now. So if the administration isn't supportive of this renewal not only are we preventing the possibility of the snap back but from the standpoint of myself and many of the members of this committee we're also giving relief on missiles, basically.

Secretary KERRY. No, we're not.

Chairman ROYCE. We're giving relief on actions which we would consider terrorist activity, you know, especially the attacks by the Quds Forces.

Secretary KERRY. Mr. Chairman, I respectfully beg to differ with you on that. We are not in fact giving them a freebie on anything, which is precisely why we left the missile sanctions in place.

The arms sanctions are in place. The sanctions on terrorist support are in place. The sanctions on human rights are in place.

They are separate from the JCPOA and they were purposefully separated in the context of these negotiations to protect our ability to be able to push Iran if they engage in those activities.

Now, we just sanctioned Iran. On January 16th, we sanctioned three entities and eight individuals for their support for the missile activities and we have made it very clear to Iran that if it chooses to engage in those activities going forward there will be further activity.

So we haven't, and secondly, Mr. President—Mr. Chairman, we haven't lost our ability to put the sanctions in place or snap back. As I said to you, they are not reliant. That power is not reliant on the Iran Sanctions Act.

Chairman ROYCE. My time is expired so I'm going to go now to Mr. Eliot Engel, the ranking member of this committee.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I'm going to throw out a few things and ask you to comment on them. First of all, to continue on Iran, what steps are we taking and will we take to combat Iran's support for terrorism and other malignant activities?

What are we doing to make sure that Israel will be safe, as Iran rearms and continues to arm Hezbollah, which threatens Israel?

With Ukraine, Russia is challenging our NATO allies across the continent. I'm encouraged by the President's commitment of significant additional resources to the defense of Europe.

But, I still think we need to do more. NATO needs to permanently station a brigade in Poland, and the Baltic States and every ally need to get above the 2 percent requirement for their defense spending.

So, I'm hoping that the administration will permanently commit more troops to the defense of Europe and press our allies to more adequately share the burden of their defense.

I'd like to ask you what the administration thinks will happen next and what we're doing vis-à-vis North Korea. Finally, I want to talk about Pakistan because I'm concerned that it continues to play a double game, fighting terrorism that has a direct impact inside Pakistan, and supporting it in places like India and Afghanistan where Pakistan believes such a policy furthers its national interests.

So what are we doing about that? How does our assistance support or hinder our hope that Pakistan begins to fight all terrorists?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Mr. Ranking Member, let me try to address those as quickly as I can.

On Iran, let me just inform everybody here that the IRGC has actually pulled its troops back from Syria. Ayatollah Khomeini pulled a significant number of troops out. Their presence is actually reduced in Syria, number one.

Number two, that doesn't mean that they're still not engaged and active in the flow of weapons from Syria through Damascus to Lebanon. We're concerned about that and that is an ongoing concern.

The other thing is that this money—I keep hearing this figure of \$100 billion, \$150 billion. Iran is not going to get a \$100 billion or \$150 billion, certainly not in the near term, and that figure is not accurate.

It's more—our estimates are it's somewhere in the vicinity of \$50 billion to \$55 billion at some point in time but it's way below that right now, and in fact they are complaining about the slowness with which there has been a process of repatriation.

So I urge you to go to the intel piece, get the intel briefing on what has happened with the IRGC and what is happening with the flow of money.

Now, with respect to Iran's behavior in the region, we have been deeply engaged with our GCC friends and I've had three or four meetings now with them since last summer when they came to Camp David.

Since then, I'm meeting with them again shortly. We've engaged in a major plus up of our military exercise, military cooperation, military support.

We are joining with them in an active effort to push back against other activities. We're part of the coalition that has been sup-

porting the Saudis and the Emiratis and others who pushed into Yemen to protect Saudi Arabia against the Houthis.

And I believe we may even now as a result of those efforts find a ripeness in a political process that might be able to help resolve that.

On Syria, Iran has come to the table together with Russia to agree to two communiques in Vienna and a United Nations Security Council resolution outlining a framework for the political resolution of Syria.

Now, I am not here to vouch for the words. But I am here to say to you there is at least a framework on paper which we are now following with hopes of getting back to the discussion in Geneva in the next week with the support of Iran and Russia.

Now, we're going to have to put that to the test. We're not sitting here saying it's going to happen automatically. But if there's going to be a political settlement the only way to get there is with the agreement and consent of all the parties.

All the stakeholders are at the table for the first time. So we're hopeful that we can press that forward and at least come to you with a notion in a matter of months, weeks, they're either serious or they're not.

If they are not serious, then we are going to have to be talking with you about whatever Plan B is going to be. But if there's a prayer of holding Syria together unified as a whole country without further refugee migration challenges to Europe and challenges to Jordan and Lebanon and the rest of the region, we must pursue some kind of a political process.

With respect to Europe, we have engaged in a significant plus up, as I just mentioned. The budget goes from about \$700 million, \$700 million plus, \$750 million up to \$3.4 billion in our support for the forward deployment of both troops rotating support structure and assistance to Europe.

But I won't go into all the details now. Maybe I'll submit it for the record because of the time frame. But I just want to say to you that there is a very robust effort going on on the front line state support and our support for Ukraine, our pushing on Minsk.

President Obama has had three or four conversations with President Putin the course of the last months from the United Nations meeting on.

In every one of them, he spends probably 50 percent of the time at least on the issue of Ukraine and full implementation of Minsk and responsibility for protecting the integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.

So we're deeply engaged on those fronts and I think our support is welcome and very important.

Chairman ROYCE. We're going to go now to Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I hope that we are both opposed to Abu Mazen's schemes at the U.N. to achieve unilateral statehood recognition outside of the peace process.

I remain firmly opposed to your administration's offer continually to get a waiver to the law that prohibits U.S. funds from going to UNESCO, a law that has been effective at preventing the Palestinians from being admitted to other U.N. agencies. So I will continue to fight every effort by the administration to get a waiver to that law.

In its last months of legacy shopping as it tries to check off the remaining goals of its misguided foreign policy, is your administration going to abstain from a vote on a French resolution at the U.N. supporting Palestinian statehood?

So I will ask you to definitively answer here this morning, Mr. Secretary. Will the United States veto any resolution at the U.N. supporting Palestinian statehood? Yes or no.

Secretary KERRY. I don't know of any resolution by the French specifically.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. If there were?

Secretary KERRY. Well, we have always opposed any one-sided resolution, something that is unfair to Israel or that—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Thank you.

And moving on to the administration's shameful concession policy toward Cuba that has turned its back on human rights advocates, yes or no, are human rights in Cuba a priority for this administration?

Secretary KERRY. Of course they are.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Then how do you explain this year's budget request for even less democracy funding for Cuba while repression is worse than ever before?

And you're about to travel to Cuba for your second visit. Yesterday was the 20th anniversary, as you know, of the shoot down of the Brothers to the Rescue planes that were ordered by Raul Castro, resulting in the murder of innocent Americans.

Will you commit, Mr. Secretary, to the families of these victims today that you will seek the extradition of Castro regime officials responsible for the shoot down—General Ruben Martinez Puente, Lorenzo Alberto Perez y Perez, and Francisco Perez y Perez?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Madam Chair, let me just say that we are engaged actually more directly in human rights than we ever have been or capable of being because we now have negotiated additional diplomatic presence in Cuba.

We now have negotiated the right for our diplomats to be able to travel—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Secretary, are you aware that over 8,000 people were arrested—

Secretary KERRY. Yes, I'm very well—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN [continuing]. Since the December 17th announcement of President Obama—

Secretary KERRY. When you say arrested there were people who—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Arbitrary arrests, detaining human rights advocates—

Secretary KERRY. Correct. There were many people detained—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN [continuing]. Whatever you would like to call people who are being held outside of their will.

Secretary KERRY. People were indeed detained——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Eight thousand.

Secretary KERRY [continuing]. And we are very much aware of that and we have objected to that and we are in conversations——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. If I could just—thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY [continuing]. And we have succeeded in getting people released who previously had not been——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Yes, some that had been released were actually put on the list and rearrested so that they could be released again. And some who were released were—anyway——

Secretary KERRY. Some——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN [continuing]. That's very interesting about that list of freed people that Castro plays. I hope we're not silly enough to believe that.

And I'm wondering if you know on which illegally confiscated U.S. property you will be holding a press conference while you're in Havana. Last year, you held a press conference in the Hotel Nacional.

The American owner, the Intercontinental Hotel Corporation, still has a U.S.-certified claim for its majority interest in the hotel.

Do you know which illegally confiscated property you will stop at this time?

And then, finally, will you commit to this committee that you will pressure Castro to unconditionally return to the United States New Jersey cop killer JoAnne Chesimard? Human rights, confiscated property, U.S. fugitives from justice? Does any of it matter to this administration?

Secretary KERRY. It matters hugely. In fact, we believe we have actually created more opportunities for intervention, more opportunities to make progress.

One in four people in Cuba are now beginning to work for private enterprise. They are able to move money——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. How do you explain the massive exodus of 80 percent increase of Cubans leaving the island since the——

Secretary KERRY. Madam Chair, do you want the answer—do you want an answer or do you want to just ask a question? I can sit here if you want to do that.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. But you're talking about small business owners that are just—I'd like to go to that optometrist——

Secretary KERRY. I haven't finished my answer.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN [continuing]. Because those rose-colored glasses are amazing. There have been massive arrests, massive exodus and still we talk about this nonexistent entrepreneurial class in Cuba.

Secretary KERRY. We now have more opportunity to engage. We have more visits taking place with various groups, NGOs and others who are going to Cuba and engaging with the Cuban people than ever before in the last 50 years of our policy. We believe——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. They're leaving in record numbers.

Secretary KERRY [continuing]. This has a greater chance of changing Cuba than anything that has happened in the last 50 years. Didn't work for 50 years.

Chairman ROYCE. We need to go to Mr.——

Secretary KERRY. Nothing changed. Now it is changing.

Chairman ROYCE. We need to go to Mr. Gregory Meeks of New York. Time has expired.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, first, I want to thank you for the great work that you've been doing and I just want to ask three quick questions in the spirit of what the chair has asked us to make sure that we're timely and give you an opportunity to answer those questions.

First question, of course, deals with the situation in Turkey as it moves a tipping point. Specifically, I'm referring to tensions and conflict between Turkey and the Kurdish community.

I think the details are important because we're working well with the Syrian Kurds—the YPK—in the fight against ISIL. Nevertheless, the rising tensions between the Kurds and Turkey have deepened and particularly since the tragic events in Ankara.

And so my question basically there is how is Turkey's tension with the Kurds affecting the ongoing fight against Daesh and the end of the humanitarian tragedy there and what role if any can the United States play in helping with the Kurdish question.

Secondly—different part of the world—as you also indicated in your opening statement, I am delighted that, you know, we were able to share the fifteenth anniversary of Plan Colombia with President Santos here and now we're talking about Peace Colombia, which I think is tremendously important, as we hopefully get to an end of that situation there.

So but I'm concerned about how we make sure that Africans, Colombians and indigenous are included in the \$450 million that's there.

And finally, you also mentioned that we have concluded the negotiations in Asia on TPP and if we do not vote here in the United States to support the administration's negotiations, what setbacks if any will it have for us in the region, whether it's dealing with our allies and friends that are part of the agreement vis-à-vis China, and will they have a strategic advantage over us?

Secretary KERRY. Thank you very much, Congressman. I appreciate the questions. Let me just move quickly through them.

Turkey is our NATO ally. We work very closely with Turkey, obviously. Turkey has a border with Syria and Turkey has enormous interest in what is happening there.

We are very sensitive to this challenge of their concern about the PKK, their concern about the links to the PKK, YPG and so forth, and we've been talking with them considerably about it.

We need to respect Turkey's concerns and we will. We have, we believe. Going forward, it is very important that there not be a different problem created by the short-term solution of working with the Kurds and then that creates a longer-term challenge for all of us in the region.

So we're working very, very carefully. On the other hand, we've also needed to have some people on the ground who are prepared to push back against Daesh.

Kobani is an example of that. We were able to hold Kobani and drive Daesh out of Kobani as a result of Kurd support and the Peshmerga particularly with respect to the northwest component of Iraq have been particularly helpful and engaged.

They were essential to a number of successful military initiatives to push Daesh back, and in fact there are different Kurds because some are more prepared and more comfortable working with Turkey than others are and those divisions are very complicated and need to be managed carefully.

Bottom line to your question is we are talking with the Turks right now about how to proceed in ways that do not cross important lines for them and that respect the sensitivities of the region and I'm confident we will be able to do that.

With respect to Peace Colombia, we have committed, as you know, and it's in the budget, a very important de-mining initiative which could take place in the aftermath of an agreement.

There are still some difficult issues to resolve in the context of the agreement and we're encouraging that process. President Obama has appointed Bernie Aronson as a special envoy to those talks.

He has the respect and confidence of President Santos and the other participants. I may well be meeting with some of them shortly in the next days, depending on how events flow.

There are many countries that are supportive of this effort and our hope is that we can resolve the transitional justice issues and the victims issues, which are two of the most critical ones outstanding at the moment.

On the TPP, folks, I just—you know, I know—I mean, I've been part of trade debate on the Hill for the 28-plus years. I served in the Senate and I know how difficult it is.

I was there when NAFTA passed and we went through some enormous transitions. This agreement is different from any trade agreement that I saw at any of the time that I was here because labor requirements, environment requirements are boldly within the four corners of the agreement and because this is essential, frankly, to raising the business standards of the region.

It eliminates 18,000 taxes on American goods that can be exported into the region. It's a benefit to American workers.

It will create jobs here in America and it will profoundly impact the standards going forward for the protection of intellectual property, for the protection under cyber, and for our ability to be able to raise the transparency and accountability by which people do business.

If this doesn't pass then we are rejecting the most important economic initiative and unifying moment of, I think, the last, you know, 20, 30 years and we would be turning our back on American leadership in that endeavor and then leave to people who want to race to the bottom the standards for doing business, the absence of transparency, the absence of efforts to counter corruption, to deal with reform.

Important reforms are contained in this TPP and I simply urge you look at it, analyze it and I believe in the end you will agree this is not like any prior trade agreement and I believe takes us to a much better place and reinforces American leadership in the region.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Chris Smith of New Jersey.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your service.

A couple of questions. When I learned late last year that the administration was contemplating designating massive crimes against the Yazidis as genocide, which it is, but not Christians, I convened an emergency hearing on December 9th.

Mirza Ismail, chairman of the Yazidi Human Rights Organization-International, testified that the Yazidis were on the verge of annihilation but also said the Yazidis and Christians—this is his quote—“face this genocide together.”

Chaldean Bishop Kalabat testified, and I quote him,

“Christians have encountered genocide and the Obama administration refuses to recognize their plight.”

Dr. Gregory Stanton of Genocide Watch testified,

“Failure to call ISIS’ mass murder of Christians, Muslims, and other groups in addition to the Yazidis by its proper name, genocide, would be an act of denial as grave as U.S. refusal to recognize the Rwandan genocide in 1994.”

My first question is when and will Christians and other minority faiths be included in a genocide designation? And secondly, because I know I only have 5 minutes, last year a Reuters investigative report—it was a very incisive report and without objection I would ask it be made part of the record—found that Tier 3 recommendations made by the Trafficking in Persons Office experts in 14 instances including Malaysia, China, Cuba, India, and Oman were rejected further up the chain of command at State and artificially given a clean bill of health for other political purposes.

I convened a hearing. Kari Johnstone testified in November. I asked a lot of pointed questions about who made these decisions, were there other political factors involved. She was very tight lipped—very good person but did not convey information.

Can you assure us, because the new TIP Report will be coming out very shortly, that that won’t happen again this year?

You have the credibility of the TIP Report in speaking truth to power and defending victims against these heinous crimes of sex and labor trafficking, as you know, because you were a very strong supporter of it as a Senator and, of course, as Secretary of State.

We have to get the book right. What you do with that is all up to the administration in terms of penalties and sanctions. But the book has to speak truth to power by getting it right.

Fourteen instances. Can you respond?

Secretary KERRY. Yes, I can, and I will respond.

I am responsible for that report. I accept responsibility for that report. I made the decision about Malaysia and I made it strictly on the merits and in fact Malaysia has made improvements.

It has increased prosecutions. It has increased its investigations. It has passed amendments on anti-trafficking. It has passed amendments on providing better law enforcement protection.

It has issued regulations in consultation with NGOs and it has increased law enforcement efforts to prosecute and convict and it had additional convictions.

Now, you know, you have to make a judgement in some of these cases. But I will absolutely vouch for the integrity of this process.

We have a very detailed year-long effort where people are measuring and I have instructed our Embassies to be engaged year long in working with countries to try to give them time to make changes, to respond to our needs.

Sometimes you are better off working with, encouraging and getting people to do something than just slamming them in a report and finding that they say well, to hell with them and they walk away and they don't respond.

We found, in the case of Malaysia and some other countries, we've actually been able to make progress. But I can assure you this report will demote somebody who deserves to be demoted and we will call it as we see it.

And I don't think anybody—you know, but I'm responsible—

Mr. SMITH. With respect, Cuba, China, Oman—we were told that Oman, because they helped on the negotiations with Iran, Cuba because of the rapprochement that's occurred, and China—when it comes to sex trafficking because of the missing girls, tens of millions of missing girls, has become the ultimate magnet for pimps who are turning women into commodities and selling them across borders into China.

It is, I believe, the worst violator in the entire world in terms of the massive numbers. So I would hope China would be looked at. And, again, on the Christian genocide designation, if you could just speak to that.

Secretary KERRY. I'll come back to that. I do want to speak to that very much.

But let me just say to you, you know, each of these are real judgments that we make—that I make, ultimately. On Cuba, Cuba was upgraded to a Tier 2 watch list from Tier 3 because it did make significant efforts to address and prosecute sex trafficking including the conviction of 13 sex traffickers and it provided more services to sex trafficking victims.

The government provided training to Cuban officials to address sex trafficking. The Ministry of Tourism actually reached out to address sex tourism and reduced the demand for commercial sex and they have committed to reform their laws in accordance with the U.N. Palermo protocol.

Now, if that doesn't happen then there's a measurement to try to go backwards. But we felt that in each of these cases there was progress.

Now, I would put on the record here today we are concerned that the Government of Cuba has not recognized forced labor as a problem, criminalized forced labor or reported efforts to prevent it.

And so there are things that we need to do going forward and that's what we'll measure. On the Christian issue, I share your concern very, very much. Again, this is a judgment that I have to make.

I will make it, and any reports that we have made a decision to the contrary, that the decision has been made not to, are incorrect. That doesn't mean we made a decision to do so.

This has to be done of the basis of a legal standard with respect to genocide and the legal standard with respect to crimes against humanity.

I have asked our legal department to evaluate—to reevaluate, actually, several observations that were circulating as part of the vetting process of this issue and I'm concerned about it and I will make a judgment.

I will also try to do so very, very soon. We know this is hanging out there.

Chairman ROYCE. We need to go to Mr. Albio Sires of New Jersey.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for all your hard work. I want to go back to the topic of Cuba. I know that we have had this issue of 50 years.

But there seems to be more repression in the last 10 years—this year, this past year than in the last 10 years.

And I was wondering with all the people going back and forth to Cuba are any efforts being made to bring JoAnne Chesimard back to the United States?

Secretary KERRY. We are discussing all of the outstanding—I might add, in conjunction with the chairwoman's question also, we are entering into the period now we're going to begin to be discussing the confiscated property and that's a very critical component of this as well as extradition or release of various people and all of those human rights issues are on the table.

I pursue them and the President will pursue them when he's there.

Mr. SIRES. JoAnne Chesimard?

Secretary KERRY. Yes. I said we will be working on all of these issues. I can't go into the specifics of each of them now.

Mr. SIRES. And there seems to be more repression now than in the last 10 years after we made all these contacts with Cuba. Are we addressing that?

Secretary KERRY. Well, yes, we are addressing the arrests. We were particularly incensed by the arrest of several of the people who had been part of the release effort originally and here's what the Cubans say.

The Cubans say well, they went out and broke the law again and we looked at what they had allegedly broken and we object entirely.

One of them had hung a sign in a window saying that I will—you know, I will only vote in an election in which I can vote to choose my President and so forth—and 4 year sentence.

That's ridiculous. It's obscene, and we believe it's obscene and we told them that is wrong. So we continue to press those issues. But we do have more ability to be able to interact with the Cuban people.

When I was there to raise the flag, to have the Marines raise the flag—the Marines who lowered the flag were there to raise the flag—there were Cubans massed behind the—

Mr. SIRES. There were no dissidents, though. Dissidents weren't invited.

Secretary KERRY. No, no, no. These were people who cheered mightily at the return of the United States and the presence of our country, and my speech in which I talked about democracy and talked about the need to have protection of human rights was

broadcast for the entire country and some of it—a little bit of it in Spanish, and the President's—

Mr. SIREs. Well, our diplomats—

Secretary KERRY. We have more ability—we have more ability because of this to interact with the Cuban people and more Americans are traveling there and interacting—

Mr. SIREs. Even our diplomats are restricted from moving around throughout the island.

Secretary KERRY. Our diplomats—we negotiated an ability for our diplomats, a specific number, as we test the, you know, expansion of this relationship.

More diplomats are able to proceed to travel around unannounced and without people following them or engaged in any activities. We have diplomats who are able to travel around the country.

Mr. SIREs. Are they actually traveling?

Secretary KERRY. I believe they are. I've heard nothing to the contrary.

Mr. SIREs. The other thing I want to talk about is Colombia. If they do come to an understanding I hope that we do not walk away from helping Colombia.

Secretary KERRY. We are deeply committed. President Obama—that was part of the reason for the celebration of the 15-year mark. We invested—we, you, everybody here—well, not everybody but those of you in the upper dais certainly invested significantly in the late 1990s in Plan Colombia and it's made all the difference.

That is why we now talk about Plan Paz, Plan Peace, because we want to continue that investment.

Mr. SIREs. If we do reach peace—I hope that we still continue to assist Colombia.

Secretary KERRY. So do I. So do I.

Mr. SIREs. And the other thing—this morning in the news I saw that Russia gave Afghanistan all these arms. What do we make of that, I mean, now that there's an incursion by the Russians into Afghanistan?

Secretary KERRY. The Russians are deeply concerned about the stability of the country. They have raised the issue with us of trying to protect the region. They have concerns about the countries near them.

They have concerns about the flow of terrorists. That is also one of their concerns about Syria. And so they are engaged—in fact, we are discussing with the Russians these issues of security for the ongoing challenges of Afghanistan.

Mr. SIREs. So were you aware that they were going to give these arms to Afghanistan?

Secretary KERRY. We know that they're supporting the Afghan—

Mr. SIREs. This morning—it was in the news this morning.

Secretary KERRY. You're talking about the Afghan Government or the—

Mr. SIREs. Yes, they gave 10,000 rifles or whatever, you know, arms to—

Secretary KERRY. Yes. Yes, we support that.

Mr. SIREs. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. We now go to Mr. Dana Rohrabacher of California.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, and again, thank you for your service to our country. You work very hard for us and while we have some policy disagreements you have our respect and our gratitude.

So, first of all, let me mention then some of these issues that we may have disagreements on. When you say that the decision will be made very, very soon to act on the idea of whether Christians and Yazidis are targets of genocide, let me just note this had been going on—we have been seeing this now for well over a year—roughly, several years now of the slaughter of Christians in the Middle East.

And for us to not have made a decision and that we're making the decision but that decision hasn't been made yet is unacceptable.

We're talking about the lives of tens of thousands of people who are being brutally slaughtered, targeted for genocide.

I have a bill, H.R. 4017, and the President has commented that it would just be giving preference to Christians.

Is it preference to give—I mean, is it wrong to give preference to people who are targets of genocide and say we're going to save them, realizing that they are the ones who are most likely to be slaughtered?

Secretary KERRY. Well, this decision has to be made strictly on—and has to be made quickly and I understand that.

But I only—I think I only had the first discussion come to my desk on this in terms of the legal interpretations a couple of weeks ago and that's when I—that's when I immediately initiated some reevaluation which I'm looking at and I can tell you I want to do this as quickly as I can.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Well, let me just suggest, having this come to your attention only weeks ago—

Secretary KERRY. Well, it has to go through—it requires—Congressman, it does require a lot of fact gathering. I mean, you have to get the facts from the ground more than just anecdotal—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Secretary, the whole world knows that Christians are being slaughtered in the Middle East. It's clear.

It's time for America to act and the excuse that we've got to study it, we got to ask the lawyers what the wording is, is this really preference or not, is unacceptable, and I would hope that your word that it's going to be acted on very soon we're going to hold you to that.

So second, about the idea here, do you agree with some of the administration officials that claim that Russia is a greater threat to our national security than is radical Islamic terrorism?

Secretary KERRY. I think—you know, I don't want to get into a sort of either/or here because I don't think it's necessary. I think that what the Defense Department and others have been saying is that they see activities that Russia has engaged in which present challenges.

For instance, what happened with Crimea, what happens in the Donbass, what's happened in support for the separatists, the long process of back and forth on Minsk implementation is interpreted

by the front line states as a threat and there's engagement by Russia through its propaganda, through operatives in some of these other countries. So it is perceived of as engaging——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Secretary——

Secretary KERRY. Let me just finish. Let me just finish.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay, sir.

Secretary KERRY. I believe if you wanted me to put on the table the top threat to the United States today in terms of day to day life and the stability of the world, it is violent extremism, radical religious extremism and the violence of——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Are you unable to say radical Islamic terrorism, as our President is unable to say?

Secretary KERRY. I think you just heard me say radical religious extremism.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. No. You didn't say radical——

Secretary KERRY. It's not always extreme——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. You don't want to say radical Islamic extremism.

Secretary KERRY. It's predominantly Islamic.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. It is disheartening when a member of——when a representative of our Government can't say radical Islamic terrorism and at the same time can't make a decision whether Christians are being targeted for genocide. This is not acceptable.

About your point on Russia and whether or not we consider them the greatest threat over radical Islamic terrorism, let me just note that increasing the spending of our military spending in Europe so that we'll now have more tanks in Europe could be taken as a hostile act by Russia as well.

It's time for us to get out of this cycle of well, we're going to find things that they can——that they're doing that we consider hostile and vice versa.

Russia has——we have every reason, do we not, Mr. Secretary, of trying to find a way we can work with Russia to combat what is the real threat, which is radical Islamic terrorism.

Secretary KERRY. Congressman, I think you heard me say that it is predominantly Islamic and I have no hesitation in saying that and I've said that in many parts of the world.

That's not the issue and yes, we are trying to cooperate with Russia with respect to this issue in Syria right now. Russia is the co-chair with us of the international Syria support group and of the cessation of hostilities task force.

And we are working very closely on the countering violent extremism initiatives, which President Obama has led in the U.N. and elsewhere in convening people to work against violent extremism on a global basis.

To me, this is the greatest challenge we face because there are hundreds of millions of young people in many of these countries where you have 60 to 70 percent of the nation under the age of 35 and if they don't have jobs and if they are not educated and there is not opportunity or we don't keep radical religious extremists of any kind from reaching them and turning them in to a suicide bomber or an extreme operative of one kind, we have a problem——all of us.

So this is, to me, the more prevalent challenge that we all face and Russia shares an interest in working with us to deal with that challenge.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Mr. Gerry Connolly of Virginia.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Secretary.

Obviously, my colleague wants to get you to say that the number-one threat is Islamic terrorism.

But is it not also true not to dilute anything that the biggest victims of that terrorism are in fact Islamists themselves and that many of our allies fighting this terrorist war are Islamic countries? Is that not true?

Secretary KERRY. They are indeed our very significant allies in this effort and I would say every single country of the world they are joining in an effort to deal with the terrible distortion of one of the world's principal religions.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I think that's a very important point, Mr. Secretary, to put it in context because it's not that my friend would do that. I don't mean that.

But we have heard some Presidential candidates taint an entire faith with something I think grossly unfairly when in fact victims are Muslims and many of the countries allied with us in the fight against terrorists are in fact Muslim countries.

So it's a very complex situation. But not subject to some simplification or oversimplification of who are the villains and who are the good guys. So I just thought we'd get that on the record.

I think this is your first visit back since JCPOA, the Iran nuclear agreement got implemented and I just want to say for one I think it's one of the most successful things U.S. foreign diplomacy has done in a long time, and despite the critics and all the predictions we had a hearing the other week and established definitively the fact Iran has complied.

And if you're looking at removing an existential threat to Israel we did it. And I just want to congratulate you and if you want to disagree that—about compliance please feel free. But it's my observation that in every metric we set so far we have not seen cheating.

We have not seen subterfuge. We have been able to observe and validate and in fact Iran has complied. That doesn't make Iran a good guy in the international stage but it does mean we in fact were able to deliver an enforceable agreement and improves everybody's security.

I don't know if you want to comment on that, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY. I thank you. I thank you, Congressman, very, very much and that is in fact what we concur with, that they have complied.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you. Real quickly, I want to pivot to Crimea and the Ukraine.

One of the concerns I've got, and I know it's shared by friends on both sides of the aisle, is with respect to Soviet expansionism, Soviet imperialism, hegemony, whatever word we want to use for it, it all starts with Crimea.

If you let Crimea go now you're quibbling over the price in eastern Ukraine or Abkhazia or wherever and what is the United States' position with respect to the illegal annexation of Crimea?

Secretary KERRY. That it is illegal and we're not ceding Crimea with respect to anything. But the primary focus for the moment is clearly on the Donbass and the Minsk agreements implementation.

Mr. CONNOLLY. But we're not going to give up on the Crimea?

Secretary KERRY. No, we have no intention of that.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And the President—if I'm correct, I know some of my friends have criticized him for the issuance of executive orders but presumably not these.

He's issued executive orders 13660, 661, 662, and 685 blocking property, persons, and transactions related to the illegal annexation of Crimea and subversion in the Eastern Ukraine.

How is compliance going with those executive orders and is the administration seeking additional legislative relief with respect to the subject?

Secretary KERRY. We believe that Russia continues to pay a real price for the annexation of Crimea and Crimea is physically isolated from international transport links now, from the global financial system.

Its tourism sector has collapsed. It remains unable to provide full significant electricity to its population and inflation has completely erased any potential of the Russian promises of a better standard of living for the people.

Now, it's obviously tragic for the people of Crimea. We know that since the annexation the human rights situation for the people of Crimea has deteriorated and there has been a mounting repression of minorities, particularly the Tartars.

So we continue to press Russia on this issue and I believe that the measures that are in place are having an impact.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Steve Chabot of Ohio.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Let me thank you, Mr. Secretary, and thank you for your long service to our country.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you very much.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Mr. Secretary.

This is the 20th year that I've had the honor to serve on the Foreign Affairs Committee. I've chaired the Middle East Subcommittee.

I've chaired the Asia Pacific Subcommittee and I've had the opportunity to listen to and to question a number of foreign—or excuse me, a number of our Secretaries of State from Warren Christopher to Madeleine Albright to Colin Powell to Condoleezza Rice to Hillary Clinton, to yourself in the past and again here today.

Now, this administration has less than a year to go. So what I'd like to do is to ask you to address some of the things which many would argue haven't gone so well and what we can learn from these things and hopefully avoid repeating in the future and as you know I've got limited time and I have several questions.

So I'd ask that you keep your answers reasonably succinct because I would try to avoid to interrupt you.

First, you've already been asked about the Iran deal. But I'd like to go back before the deal and ask this, and I realize, of course, that Hillary Clinton was Secretary of State and not yourself. So I'm not blaming you.

But I would ask this question. Was not aiding the students and the pro-democracy reformers in the Iranian green movement a mistake?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I think my memory is that President Obama spoke out in support of—and we suffered a lot of criticism from Iran. In fact, this is one of the hurdles we had to get over in our negotiation. They believed that we were not only supportive but even responsible for it.

Mr. CHABOT. That's not my recollection. You know, these young pro-democracy folks pleaded for our help—pleaded for it and they got exactly nothing from this administration.

President Obama essentially, if you go back and look at what he said at the time, he took the side, I would argue, of the repressive mullahs of Iran over its freedom-seeking people.

I think most people who were looking at it at the time would say it was shameful what happened. Let me move on.

In retrospect, was it a mistake to pull all U.S. troops out of Iraq?

Secretary KERRY. I believe that this has been badly misinterpreted because there was no contemplation—first of all, the agreement itself was made by President Bush to draw the troops out.

What President Obama tried to do was negotiate with Prime Minister Maliki the remainder that would stay and they were non-combat troops. Everybody needs to focus on that.

There were no combat troops that were going to stay there. So even if they had stayed that would not have made a difference with respect to what was happening because Prime Minister Maliki was turning the army into his own personal private sectarian enterprise and that is the principal reason—

Mr. CHABOT. Again, I have to interrupt you but I—

Secretary KERRY. Let me just finish. That's the principal—

Mr. CHABOT. I think—I think next to the Iran deal I would argue that it was this administration's greatest mistake and it led, I think, directly to the rise of ISIS.

Let me ask this. How did this administration so misread Putin? Now, to be fair, President Bush did too. He famously looked into Putin's eyes, believing that he'd got a sense of his soul.

But let's face it, Putin's been undermining U.S. policy at every turn. Why did this administration not see that coming? Why did it let it happen?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I don't think that anybody could predict what an unpredictable set of choices might produce. The bottom line is that at the time a number of other things happened which had an impact on Putin's perception of what was going on.

Mr. CHABOT. Let me just—I'm almost out of time. Just let me comment on your comment. It seems to me that from the start of this administration, from Hillary's famous pressing of the reset button, that we've been played like chumps by Putin.

This administration scrapped the missile defense program with our allies, Poland and the Czech Republic, to placate Putin. And what did we get?

You know, he invaded and annexed Crimea, started a war in Eastern Ukraine, which is ongoing, shoots down a civilian airliner and, of course, denies it—his allies did that—threatens the NATO

alliance, props up Assad in Syria, harbors the treasonous Edward Snowden, and on and on.

I'd argue that this administration's policy with respect to Russia has been feckless and, unfortunately, I'm out of time. So I'm going to have to leave it there.

Secretary KERRY. Can I just respond very quickly, Congressman?

There was an agreement which Yanukovich was supposed to honor and we don't believe he honored it. But Putin, from his perspective, had an attitude that there was a deal and the deal was broken, and he thought and perceived certain things.

People respond in certain ways and perceptions. I don't believe that—and also the European Association agreement and the way that had been maneuvered had a lot to do with perceptions.

Now, we are building the missile defense. The administration came to a conclusion they could do a more effective one and that is currently being deployed.

Russia still objects to what is happening but it's happening. So nobody pulled back from doing something as a consequence. Nobody's been played for a chump.

We went in and put sanctions in place that have profoundly negatively impacted Russia's economy, profoundly impacted Russia's ability to move and maneuver in the region and ultimately resulted in the Minsk agreement, which we hope can be implemented fully.

If it is implemented fully, our policy will have in fact been successful because Russia will not have taken over all of Ukraine, not even the eastern part where the separatists will then still be part of Ukraine and in an arrangement with the government in Kiev.

So I just don't agree with your conclusion there and I also think that if you look, Russia's cooperated with the United States on the Iran agreement.

Russia cooperated with the United States in getting the chemical weapons that were declared out of Syria. Russia has cooperated with the United States and the Syrian International Support Group and the Vienna process and now in an effort to try to fight against Daesh and——

Chairman ROYCE. We need to go to Mr. Ted Deutch of Florida.

Secretary KERRY. It's not—it's just not—you know, the point I'm trying to make is it doesn't lend itself to just one judgment. This is more complicated and for better or worse more nuanced than some of these conclusions allow for.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Ted Deutch of Florida.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thanks for being here. Thanks for your service to our country.

Mr. Secretary, I had the pleasure this morning of spending some time with Amir Hekmati and as you know Bob Levinson is my constituent and it's wonderful to see Amir and I'm thrilled for the Rezaian and the Abedini families but I just want to urge you to continue to press with the utmost, the greatest sense of commitment and urgency to bring Bob home to his family.

I'm grateful for your raising this issue. I just urge you in the strongest way to really continue to push.

I'd like to talk about the Iran agreement. Without making judgments about whether it's the greatest achievement ever or the

worst thing that's ever been done, I think it's—this is a 15-year term, 5 months since it was signed. We just had the implementation day.

A lot of us, whatever side we were on before, want to see this succeed. So I want to focus just specifically on the snap back provisions, which had come up earlier—both the international snap back of international sanctions and the snap back of domestic sanctions.

On the international, the tests of the ballistic missiles by Iran clearly violate the Security Council resolution. Ambassador Power, to her credit, took this to the Security Council and the Security Council has kicked it to the sanctions committee, as I understand it, and the question is if what is in this case a clear violation can't be sanctioned at the international level—I commend you and the administration for taking action as the United States against these three entities and individuals.

But at the international level if the Security Council cannot—when there's a clear violation like this over the term of this agreement why shouldn't we have concerns or how do we address the concerns that they'll never be able to act when there's a violation. That's with respect to international.

On the domestic front, you talked about the Iran Sanctions Act and the reauthorization of the Iran Sanctions Act. I just wanted to go back to a story that was in Politico last summer, in August in the midst of the heated discussions about the JCPOA.

A senior official told Politico, and I quote,

“We absolutely support renewal of the Iran Sanctions Act. It's an important piece of legislation.

“We want to discuss renewal with Congress in a thoughtful way at the right time. Now is not the time as the ISA doesn't expire until next year and because we are focused on implementation.

“We will have plenty of opportunity in the coming months to take part in the deliberate and focused communications with Congress on this important topic.”

The deal has now been signed. Implementation Day has now come and passed—come and gone. It is 2016, the year in which this is going to expire.

Mr. Secretary, if not now, when? When will we have these discussions that the administration was committed to having last summer?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Congressman, first of all, on Bob Levinson, I understand completely.

I just met with the family recently and I completely understand the tension, the feelings, and the disappointment that they feel. They see people come back and Bob is not among them and they don't have answers yet.

But we have put a process in place as part of the actual agreement that we reached whereby he is very much front and center in terms of our following through to trace every lead there is and to be personally engaged.

I won't get into greater detail but I shared with the family some of the things that we plan to do and we will—in fact, we are doing them.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you.

Secretary KERRY. With respect to the UNSCR, you asked about the missiles—does it have the meaning somehow that we’re not going to do what we said we’re going to do and the answer to that is no.

The missiles were left outside of JCPOA. JCPOA stands by itself. The missiles are a separate track. The arms are a separate track and we purposefully did not want to confuse the implementation and accountability for the implementation with these other things.

So that’s why we put additional sanctions on because of the missile launch on three entities and eight individuals. Now, you raised the question about 2016—it not now, when. Well, now is a good time to have the discussion.

This is part of the discussion. We’re having it here today. And I’m saying to you that we should be informed in whatever we choose to do on the ISA by how well the implementation goes, by how necessary it is to be thinking about their concern about the application of the sanctions.

We don’t need—we don’t need the ISA to be able to have snap back.

Mr. DEUTCH. I’m sorry, I’m out of time.

But I just wanted to ask is one of the reasons that there is a hesitation to go forward now even after Implementation Day is that Iran is going to view this as—interpret this as some sort of violation of the agreement which, clearly, it’s not?

Secretary KERRY. No. I think—I think it’s on its face exactly what I just described to you. There’s no rush. We know we can pass whatever we would need to very quickly, number one.

Number two, we want to be—in whatever we decide to do, whatever message it might send, ought to be advised by the efficiency and effectiveness of the way this has been implemented so that whatever we’re putting in it is in fact rational and related to the process itself.

As you yourself just said, we’re only a few months into it. Let’s get into it—there’s plenty of time here—and see where we are.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Mr. Joe Wilson of South Carolina.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here.

I’m very grateful that Speaker Paul Davis Ryan has provided shocking admissions of how Iran will use sanctions relief to fund terrorism, which I believe the American people need to know puts families at risk.

On January 21st, Mr. Secretary, you admitted,

“I think that some of the funds from the sanctions relief will end up in the hands of the IRGC or other entities, some of which are labeled terrorists.”

This is sad, Mr. Secretary. Iran is widely recognized as the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism, supporting groups like Hamas and Hezbollah.

They are responsible for murdering hundreds of Americans. It therefore should come as no surprise that at least some of the \$100 billion in sanctions relief granted under the nuclear agreement will

be used to finance terrorists. You are not alone in this assertion. In fact, several key Obama administration officials including the President himself have made the exact same admission:

“Do we think that some of the sanctions coming down that Iran will have some additional resources for its military for some of the activities in the region that are a threat to us and a threat to our allies? I think that is a likelihood that they’ve got some additional resources.”

—President Barack Obama.

Also,

“We should expect that some of the portion of money would go to Iranian military that could potentially be used for the kinds of bad behavior we’ve seen in the region up to now.”

—From National Security Advisor Susan Rice.

Also,

“As Iran’s behavior the United States is under no illusions. This agreement was never based on the expectations that it would transform the Iranian regime or cause Tehran to cease contributing to sectarian violence and terrorism in the Middle East.”

—Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman.

We agree on Implementation Day in January. Speaker Paul Davis Ryan noted,

“The President himself has acknowledged Iran is likely to use this cash infusion, more than \$100 billion in total, to finance terrorists.”

This is exactly why a bipartisan majority of the House voted to reject the nuclear deal. Sanctions should be only lifted when Iran ceases its litany of illicit activities and ends its support for terrorism.

Until that day comes, we should not be complicit in fueling a regime that has a long history of hostility toward the United States and its allies.

I am particularly grateful for the bipartisan conduct of this committee with Chairman Ed Royce of California and Ranking Member Eliot Engel of New York with their thoughtful opposition to the Iran deal.

I believe Iran promotes attacks on American families with its pledge of death to America and death to Israel as proven by the intercontinental ballistic missile development as cited by Chairman Royce and Congressman Deutch.

Secretary Kerry, from your responses to Chairman Royce’s questions, what I heard you say is the administration wants to let the Iran Sanctions Act expire.

The administration, extending it through the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, is simply a power grab. Allowing ISA to expire statutorily is unacceptable.

With this background, how have Iran’s terrorist activities been affected by deal and the subsequent lifting of sanctions? Has Iranian support for terrorism increased or decreased?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Congressman, you raise a lot of questions in all that and you make some assumptions that I just don't—I don't share or agree with.

We never suggested that the goal is to let it expire. I said let's take our time and be thoughtful about it. So you're drawing a conclusion that I never lent any credence to.

Secondly, this goes back to the sort of argument about the Iran deal itself. You say we shouldn't lift sanctions until they have given up their sponsorship for terror.

The problem is would they judge—you know, they just have a different interpretation about some of those things that would have lasted a lifetime and they would have then had a nuclear weapon. Iran with a nuclear weapon would have been far more dangerous than an Iran without one.

So if you're worried about terror, the first objective is make sure they don't have a nuclear weapon. Now, we've been very honest.

I'm not going to sit here and suggest that some portion of the money might not find its way to one of those groups. But what they do is not dependent on money, Congressman. Never has been.

They're going to do it anyway. If we hadn't gotten rid of the nuclear weapon they were still supporting the Houthis. They've still been supporting Hezbollah. They've been supporting them for how many years? Countless years.

Mr. WILSON. Well, now they can finance terrorists in this country. Mr. Secretary, this is not right. I yield.

Chairman ROYCE. Okay. We're going to go to Mr. David Cicilline of Rhode Island.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your extraordinary service to our country.

I have four questions that I'm going to run through quickly to give you as much time as possible to answer. The first is I'm very concerned about the deteriorating state of the rule of law and adherence to human rights in Egypt.

The Egyptian judiciary has long been rife with corruption and political agendas. But reports yesterday exemplify how bad this situation has become when a Cairo military court handed down a mass life sentence to 116 defendants that mistakenly included a 3-year-old boy. This is incredibly outrageous and really does exemplify how little the Egyptian judiciary and security apparatus care for the rule of law.

And I would like to hear what we're doing about it and additionally in the appendix to this year's budget request you asked Congress to remove Egypt's partial aid conditions accompanying national security waiver and the reporting requirement entirely.

What's the justification for proposing the removal of this language and what kind of signal will it send to the Egyptian Government and the Egyptian people?

Secretary KERRY. Congressman, the removal of which language?

Mr. CICILLINE. The language related to partial aid conditions, the national security waiver and the reporting requirement. The second question is you—you know, there are tremendous challenges.

You've outlined them in your testimony and the budget—the international affairs budget which funds programs designed to confront these challenges continues to shrink.

Since Fiscal Year 2010 the overall funding for the international affairs—that's the base budget plus OCO—has been to produce 12 percent and the Fiscal Year 2007 request is slightly down from last year.

What are your most serious concerns about the resources that are necessary to confront the many challenges facing our country and does this budget really provide the resources that you think we need?

And third and finally, the U.S.-Israeli memorandum of understanding I know is going to expire in 2018. I understand that we've already begun to discuss a new set of terms.

What's the status of those negotiations and what kind of training and equipment and assistance will Israel need in light of increased instability in the region and threats to their security? Tried to do those fast.

Secretary KERRY. Okay. No, I appreciate it. Congratulations in moving up to the upper dais there.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you.

Secretary KERRY. The—let me just begin with your question about Egypt itself and look, these sentences, obviously, are of enormous concern to all of us.

We've expressed that very straightforwardly and we've seen a deterioration over the course of this last—these last months, I guess, is a fair way to say it, with arrests of journalists and arrests of some civil society personalities.

We understand that Egypt is going through a very difficult challenge right now. There are terrorists in the Sinai, there are the challenges of extremism that has played out in bombings in Cairo and in Sharm el-Sheikh, elsewhere.

So it's difficult. Nobody is suggesting otherwise. But we believe deeply that countries that protect freedom of speech and assembly and encourage civil society will ultimately do better and be stronger in their ability to be able to defeat extremism.

We work very closely—I have a good working relationship with my counterpart. We talk frequently. We are working on these issues on a regular basis.

We have succeeded in getting some people released. We've succeeded in getting some progress on a number of human rights issues. But it is a concern. Their judicial system, which operates separately, makes some moves that I think sometimes, you know, the leadership itself finds difficult to deal with.

And our hope is that over the course of these next weeks and months we can make some progress in moving back on these. I do—I think Egypt said something about the 3-year-old, if I recall, but I don't want to—I don't want to dwell on it right now.

On the resources, we are cannibalizing a lot of programs within the budget. I mean, bottom line is everybody is dealing with difficulties in governance today as a result of our budget challenges and it's no secret to any of you because these are the fights that you've all been engaged in on the floor.

I think we're making a mistake—I mean, I try not to get into the politics in this position at all but I do think the United States is not responding in ways that we ought to be to our global responsi-

bility as reflected in the budget overall and I think that we can and should be doing more.

I think we handicap ourselves. I think we're behaving to some degree—for the richest nation on the face of the planet—we're choosing to behave more like, you know, a country that actually doesn't have resources available to it.

It's a question of which choices we make, where we want to make the overall trades in the budget and we are where we are. So we have had to cannibalize considerably to make things work and it really, in my judgement, diminishes the ability of the most powerful nation on the planet to be able to actually affect things more.

And so we see a frustration on the part of our people that the world is in turmoil or we're not responding adequately here or there. A fairly significant amount of that is a reflection of resources.

Sometimes it's a reflection of policy judgments—I understand that—but a lot of it is driven by the resource allocation.

With respect to Israel and the MOU, we will—we're working on it now. We're in negotiations. We have never ever put any of Israel's security needs or challenges on the table with respect to other issues between us.

Israel's security comes first and foremost. President Obama, I think, has unprecedentedly addressed those concerns with Iron Dome, with assistance, with our efforts in global institutions to not see Israel singled out and we will continue to do what is necessary to provide Israel with all the assistance necessary so it can provide for its own security.

I am confident we will get an MOU at some point in time, the sooner the better, because it allows everybody to plan appropriately.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I yield back.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here today. I'm suffering from a major head cold so I may have—go a little easy on you today.

Secretary KERRY. That's good. I don't wish a cold on you but I'll take the benefit.

Mr. MCCAUL. Last December we passed the visa waiver program bill out of my committee. It passed overwhelmingly. It was designed to keep foreign fighters from exploiting the visa waiver program from certain countries like Iraq, Syria, Sudan, and Iran.

And in the negotiations—and I was in the middle of those as were the national security chairman involved with the correspondence back and forth between Homeland, State Department, and the White House—we carved out two exceptions. One was national security and the other one was law enforcement.

In the exchange between the Department of Homeland Security they mentioned when we considered humanitarian, business purposes, cultural, journalistic, I was in the room with the majority leader.

Those exceptions were rejected. DHS came back again and the final email from the White House was that the administration supports this legislation—my thanks to all.

And then finally the White House says I spoke to State Department—they did not request any additional edits. The administra-

tion does not request any changes at this time. We're good with the text as drafted. Reopening the bill would require us to look at it again.

Yet the day after it passed, you read a letter to the Iranian Foreign Minister stating that parts of this law could be waived to accommodate Iranian business interests.

In my judgment, having played a part in that negotiation, it was in direct contradiction with the intent and the clear definition of the statute and the law.

It seems to me you're putting the interest—business interests of Iran over the security interests of the United States and, quite frankly, either misconstruing or rewriting the very law that we passed overwhelmingly by the Congress. I want to give you the opportunity to respond to that.

Secretary KERRY. I really appreciate it, Congressman McCaul. Thank you very much and I appreciate the work we've done to try to work through this.

Look, we respect, obviously, the congressional intent and we respect the purpose of this. We all share that goal. We have to protect the country.

We have to have adequate control over who's coming in to the country and we learned, obviously, in the course of the K visa situation that there's more that could be done conceivably to be able to analyze and dig into background.

But the bottom line is this. The letter that I wrote to the Iranian Foreign Minister was not an excuse for anything. It simply said that they were arguing that we had violated JCPOA and I wrote a letter saying no, it does not violate JCPOA.

It explained and defended the law and it made clear to them that we were going to keep our JCPOA commitments.

Now, the—what we're doing is actually following the letter of the law. But you have to—I please would like you to understand that our friends, our allies—French, Germans, British, others—are deeply concerned about the impact of this law inadvertent on their citizens.

They have dual nationals, and if one of—and if one of those dual nationals just travels to Iran all of a sudden and they're in a visa waiver program and they're a very legitimate business person, all of a sudden that person's ability—

Mr. McCAUL. If I could use my time. Look, I wrote the law.

Secretary KERRY. Let me just finish.

Mr. McCAUL. I'm the author of the bill. I understand the intent of the law. We had conversations with the White House. You tried to get this business exemption written into the law.

That was rejected by the leadership and the Congress, and the time to have changed that was prior to the President signing it into law.

But once the President signed it into law you can't just go back and either violate or rewrite it. I know the law. I knocked it up out of my committee and you're talking to the author of the bill.

That was not the intent of Congress to carve out a business exemption and I understand—I understand we're not—[simultaneous speaking]—the French and the Iranians in all this stuff. But that was not the intent of the Congress.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Mr. Chairman, we're not carving out a wholesale waiver intent. It's a case by case basis, very carefully and narrowly tailored, number one.

Number two, the text of the law is clear. The Secretary of Homeland Security—

Mr. McCAUL. I agree with you.

Secretary KERRY [continuing]. Waived the travel, can waive the travel or dual nationality restrictions if that—if he deems that it is in the law enforcement or national security interests of the country to do so.

Now, we believe the full and fair implementation of the law is in fact in our national security interest. We have a very thorough systematic—

Mr. McCAUL. I guess my time—I guess it depends on how you define national security interests.

I will commend—Jeh Johnson called me to add Libya, Somalia, and Yemen to this list and I am—

Secretary KERRY. I concurred in that.

Mr. McCAUL [continuing]. And I commend that decision. I'm sure you're going to construe the law in your interpretation. I do think adding those three countries was a positive step.

Just one last question. On the designation of Iran as a jurisdiction of primary money laundering concern, are we going to keep that designation or is there any intent by you to lift that designation?

Secretary KERRY. We've had no such determination. I haven't contemplated it.

Mr. McCAUL. Do you intend to consider additional measures to provide economic relief to Iran to lift any other designations?

Secretary KERRY. None at this point in time that I know of.

Mr. McCAUL. Okay. And I appreciate that.

The Chair now recognizes Brad Sherman of California.

Mr. SHERMAN. As to your bill, I'd point out that most ISIS fighters go into Turkey where perhaps their passports are stamped and then they sneak into ISIS-controlled areas where ISIS has a shoddy record of stamping passports, and we may have to look at every European passport stamped in Turkey that would obviously be an issue.

Secretary KERRY. Actually, what is now an issue is Daesh's ability to actually produce phony passports.

Mr. SHERMAN. That would be another issue.

Mr. Secretary, I've got so many issues. Most of them, I think, you'll choose to respond for the record.

First, on the budget, this committee had urged and voted that you spend \$1½ million broadcasting in the Sindhi language to reach a huge part of Pakistan—southern Pakistan—in the Sindhi language. We talked about this last time you were here.

Now your budget requests an additional \$35 million for broadcasting efforts. My hope is that you'll be able to respond for the record that if we get you a substantial increase, maybe not the full \$35 million but the first additional dollars will be to broadcast in the language of southern Pakistan.

Secretary KERRY. I think it's worth \$35 million, Congressman.

Mr. SHERMAN. It only takes \$1½ million. The rest is for whatever else you choose to spend the money on, and I want to compliment your general counsel in Karachi for looking in to the assassination of Anwar Leghari who was a protector of Sindhi culture.

As to our work against ISIS, during World War II we had bombing rules of engagement that led to the deaths of 70,000 French civilians because we were serious.

General DeGaulle never urged us not to bomb an electric facility because it would inconvenience French civilians. He never asked Dwight Eisenhower not to hit a tanker truck because a civilian might be driving it.

Yet I'm told that in bombing ISIS we will not hit a moving truck and we will not hit electric power lines because not only do we not want to kill any civilians, even those working for ISIS, but we don't want to inconvenience those living under ISIS, and it is a major inconvenience not to have electricity. I hope you would comment for the record about our rules of engagement against ISIS.

I now want to focus on Iran. North Korea provided the nuclear technology that was used at al-Kibar, which the Israelis destroyed in Syria a few years ago.

Now, North Korea has a dozen nuclear weapons. That's about what they need. Perhaps the next one goes on eBay. Not quite that flippantly but you get the point.

I spoke to the Chinese Foreign Minister yesterday and I will urge you to urge him as I did that China prevent any nonstop flight over its territory from North Korea to Tehran. Such a nonstop flight could easily export one or several nuclear weapons.

If, on the other hand, that flight stops for fuel as, of course, it should if China requires they will—I'm sure the Chinese will take a look at what's on the plane.

It's natural that you're here defending the nuclear deal. I didn't vote for it but there are very good aspects of that deal. But I'm concerned that the administration now is just in a role of defending Iran as if any comment about Iran is an attack on the deal.

During Rouhani's tenure we've seen a lot more executions in Iran and I hope that you would personally issue a statement condemning Iran's violation of human rights, particularly when they kill people for the so-called crime of waging war on God.

As to the missile sanctions, you indicate we sanctioned a few companies. We sanctioned a few individuals. Those companies don't do business in the United States.

Those individuals do not want to visit Disneyland, and I hope that you would sanction the Iranian Government for its violation with sanctions that actually affect the Iranian economy.

Otherwise, to say certain individuals who have no intention of coming to the United States will not be allowed in the United States indicates an acceptance of Iranian violations.

And under the U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231 Russia can't sell fighter planes to Iran unless the Security Council specifically approves that. I'll ask you to—will we use our veto to prevent fighter planes from being sold to Iran from Russia?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I don't think you have to use a veto. I think it's a matter of a committee—there's a committee and it's in approval in the committee. But we would not approve it.

Mr. SHERMAN. And would we—would we use our veto if necessary to prevent the sale?

Secretary KERRY. To the best of my knowledge, Congressman, I don't—I haven't looked at the specifics of the transaction, et cetera. In principle, we are very concerned about the transfer of weapons and so, you know, we would approach it with great skepticism.

But I haven't seen the specific transfer or what the request is. We have a committee that will analyze this thoroughly before anything happens and the committee signs off on it. I assure you we'll stay in touch with you.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

Mr. MCCAUL. Chair recognizes Mr. Poe from Texas.

Mr. POE. I thank the gentleman. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here.

I just want to say amen to what my friend from California has said regarding the folks in Iran that had been murdered by the regime. Two thousand three hundred have been executed, in my opinion mostly for political reasons or religious reasons.

I would hope that the United States Government, through the State Department, would condemn this action by Rouhani and the Iranian Government.

A couple of questions dealing with Georgia and Ukraine. The Russians occupy a third of Georgian territory. They occupy Crimea and they occupy parts of Ukraine's eastern territory.

Is it the U.S. position or not—tell me what the U.S. position is that the Georgia occupation is unlawful—Crimea occupation unlawful and the eastern Ukraine possession unlawful or not?

Secretary KERRY. That's correct. They are.

Mr. POE. So it's our position the Russians are unlawfully holding territory belonging to somebody else in those specific incidents?

Secretary KERRY. In one case not holding but engaged in intrusions which are assisting in the holding.

Mr. POE. And that would be in eastern Ukraine?

Secretary KERRY. Correct.

Mr. POE. Also, your predecessor has listed Georgia—if you have time this year it'd be great for our relationship if you could go to Georgia.

Secretary KERRY. I'm hoping to.

Mr. POE. And specifically I'd like to talk about a piece of legislation that has passed the House unanimously and that's the Foreign Aid Transparency Accountability Act that I have authored along with Mr. Connolly from Virginia.

It basically requires that there be accountability for foreign assistance whether—transparency and also evaluations of our aid to other countries. I think transparency in evaluations are good. The American public needs to know how their money is being spent and if it's being spent well then maybe keep it up. If it's not, then maybe we should stop it.

The State Department, though, has resisted this legislation even though it's passed the House. It's passed your former committee unanimously over in the Senate and Raj Shah, when he testified in this committee he supported it when he was USAID director.

Do you support this type of legislation or this specific legislation of transparency and accountability and evaluations of our foreign assistance?

Secretary KERRY. Congressman, of course. We share the goal completely and yes, we support transparency and accountability and we have huge transparency and accountability.

It's one of our problems. I mean, I think—I don't—I'm trying to get the numbers pinned down but the person hours and numbers of people assigned just to provide the transparency and accountability to all of you and to others is staggering.

We lose an enormous amount of our implementing productivity to simply providing the transparency and the accountability.

We're currently—we have 51 investigations going on with an unprecedented number of hundreds of thousands of pages of FOIA that we're responding to.

I've had to cannibalize bureaus to ask, you know, young capable lawyers, professionals to come out of one bureau to go sit and work on this so that we're able to meet the demands, and we're overburdened.

And I've had to—I've appointed—actually appointed a senior Ambassador, Janice Jacobs, to be our transparency accountability sort of coordinator to make sure we're able to do this.

So our concern is, you know, doing this in a way that is smart, efficient, efficient for you, efficient for us. We don't resist the goal in the least.

The American people have a right to absolute accountability and transparency. We think there are a lot of ways in which it's already provided. There are ways we may be able to streamline some of that.

So we'd like to work with you on this legislation so that it isn't, you know, another moment where we're having to transfer a lot of people away from doing what we're supposed to do.

Mr. POE. Well, the legislation—

Secretary KERRY. If you want to plus up the budget enough we can do it all.

Mr. POE. Reclaiming my time. That's exactly what the bill does. You have different group departments in the State Department doing transparency and evaluations. This makes it simpler for all of us.

Secretary KERRY. Right. But we want to have a little more say in—

Mr. POE. Reclaiming my time. It's passed the House unanimously. It's passed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously. But we're getting push back from the State Department on the legislation.

Secretary KERRY. We just want to make sure—

Mr. POE. And just a side note—just a side note—

Secretary KERRY. Congressman, only because we want to make sure it works for us in terms of our process. I mean, who can resist a piece of legislation—the Foreign Aid Accountability Transparency Act?

Mr. POE. We want it to work for the American people because as you know—reclaiming my time. I have one last comment.

You and I and most of the Members of Congress—when you mentioned the concept of foreign aid out there in the country to citizens, you know, they kind of get their backs bowed because people have been cynical for years, even though it's a little bit of money, about foreign aid.

And this legislation, I think, tells folks in the community—citizens, taxpayers who send this aid all over the world—that it's working and we can have transparency evaluation for it so they can feel better about sending that aid.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield my time.

Secretary KERRY. I'm with you. I support that 100 percent. President Obama does and he has instructed all of us to try to make sure we're streamlining and being as transparent as we can be.

Mr. MCCAUL. If we just move on. I know the Secretary's time is limited.

Mr. Grayson from Florida.

Mr. GRAYSON. Secretary Kerry, I'm going to ask you a question that is susceptible to a yes or no answer or if you prefer yes or no with an explanation.

Has Iran adhered to the nuclear deal?

Secretary KERRY. I'm sorry. Has what?

Mr. GRAYSON. Has Iran adhered to the nuclear deal? Yes or no.

Secretary KERRY. Yes, to the best of our judgement.

Mr. GRAYSON. Okay. Thank you for that.

Now, there was concern that Iran's money would be used to increase terrorism in the region after the deal was entered into. Has Iran's support for terrorism increased, decreased or remained the same since the deal was enacted?

Secretary KERRY. I think the best of our judgement would be it has remained the same.

Mr. GRAYSON. All right. Is there any evidence that the money that Iran received as a result of the deal has been diverted to support terrorism?

Secretary KERRY. We need to get into classified session to discuss that.

Mr. GRAYSON. All right.

Secretary KERRY. It's a little more complicated.

Mr. GRAYSON. We heard the phrase used at the time the deal was under negotiation and discussion that Iran would become a nuclear threshold state and it would push the limits of the agreement and get as close as it could to developing a nuclear weapon during the term of the agreement so that in 8 or 10 or 12 years it would actually have a nuclear weapon.

Is there any evidence to support that at this point?

Secretary KERRY. No.

Mr. GRAYSON. What is your inference regarding that? What is your inference regarding behavior?

Secretary KERRY. Well, the fact is Iran was a threshold nation when we began this discussion. Iran had 12,000 kilograms of 5 percent enriched. It had—I forget how much—20 percent enriched uranium.

It was one step away from being able to produce highly enriched uranium for bomb manufacturing. It had enough enriched uranium

to be able to make ten to 12 bombs. It has the technology and know-how. It has already mastered the fuel cycle.

So in effect it already was at the threshold. That's one of the reasons why we felt such urgency to try to close off these paths for actual movement to that and Iran has accepted increased transparency and accountability beyond anything that anybody else is engaged in on the planet.

I mean, they've accepted the additional protocol. They've accepted higher standards for 25 years of tracking of all uranium manufacturing. They've accepted 20 years of television intrusion on their centrifuge production and limited levels of enriched uranium in the stockpile and limited levels of enrichment itself—3.67 percent for 15 years.

So they don't have the ability to be able to make one today—just don't have it physically in that regard and we are confident of our ability to know what they're doing.

Mr. GRAYSON. Has the administration ever tried to interdict Iranian shipments to help terrorism in the region?

Secretary KERRY. Yes. We have in fact successfully interdicted.

Mr. GRAYSON. And is it likely that that effort will continue?

Secretary KERRY. Not likely. It will for certain.

Mr. GRAYSON. It will for certain? Can you give us one particular example that is not classified?

Secretary KERRY. Recently we turned around a convoy. We didn't know exactly what was on it but we thought it was headed to Yemen and we made sure that it went back to Iran.

Mr. GRAYSON. All right. I'd like to ask you a couple questions about ISIS. What is your own personal or agency assessment regarding the necessity to have ground troops involved in the fight against ISIS? Not American ground troops necessarily but any ground troops.

Secretary KERRY. Well, American ground troops in the—American special forces are engaged as enablers on the ground in Syria today and in Iraq and I am a 100 percent supporter of that.

I strongly advocate that that is a powerful way to have an impact. I am for trying to get rid of Daesh as fast as is feasible without a major American "invasion" but by enabling, by using our special forces, by augmenting the Syrian, Arab and other presence on the ground I believe it is imperative for us to try to terminate this threat as rapidly as we can.

Mr. GRAYSON. Has the American Government had discussions with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, or Jordan concerning whether they would lend ground troops to the effort to fight ISIS?

Secretary KERRY. We are engaged in discussions with them regarding their offers to do so at this time.

Mr. GRAYSON. Can you tell us anything about that?

Secretary KERRY. Not—no, I think it's in a preliminary stage. It's in discussion. They've indicated a willingness to be helpful and this is in the fight against Daesh, let me emphasize, and as part of the President's effort to explore every possibility that is reasonable of ways in which to have an impact on ending the scourge of Daesh that is being evaluated.

Mr. GRAYSON. What about other countries in the region—Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco? Have you had similar dis-

cussions regarding their potential to send ground troops against ISIS?

Secretary KERRY. There have been broad discussions with various mil-to-mil discussions and intel discussions regarding possible provision of people under certain circumstances.

Mr. GRAYSON. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. MCCAUL. The Chair recognizes——

Mr. ISSA. Chairman, could I ask unanimous consent request?

Mr. MCCAUL. Yes, sir.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the letter dated December 13, 2012 addressed to then Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton be placed in the record.

Mr. MCCAUL. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. ISSA. And I further ask that the response from the State Department dated March 27th, 2013 to then Chairman Darrell Issa be placed in the record.

Mr. MCCAUL. Without objection.

Mr. ISSA. Lastly, I would ask that the news articles from the Daily Caller dated January 30, 2016, and the Hill, dated 2/2/2016, be placed in the record.

Mr. MCCAUL. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. Issa is recognized.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, first of all, I want to congratulate you on naming Ambassador Jacobs as your czar, if you will, for FOIA requests.

I share with you the sympathy that the American people's desire to know things has outpaced the automation and the process for FOIA from the State Department.

As a former businessman, I might suggest though that as good as the Ambassador is perhaps you need to turn it over to somebody who is much better at getting data out rather than evaluating the details of State Department communication.

Having said that, the information I put in the record is for a reason. In the last days of Secretary Clinton's administration I sent her a letter specifically related to use of personal emails and I did so not because of Benghazi, not because of any other investigations you might be familiar with but because in the investigation of the Solyndra scandal at Department of Energy we had discovered that a political appointee, Jonathan Silver, had been using personal emails to circumvent FOIA and the scrutiny.

He went so far as to say, and this is in the letter to Secretary Clinton, "Don't ever send an email to DOE email with a personal email address. That makes it subpoenaable."

The letter went on to go through a number of those things and it specifically asked then Secretary Clinton whether or not she had an email and whether or not any senior agency officials ever used a personal email account to conduct official business—have any senior agency officials ever used alias emails.

That was a different investigation. And it went on, and I know by now you must have been made familiar with this letter. Approximately 2 months into your administration, as the Secretary your agency responded to that letter by not responding. Your agency sent a response that basically said here's the title and the rules.

Now, since it's been reported in those two articles that you personally communicated with Secretary Clinton your personal email to her personal email, is it true that you were aware that she had a personal email and that she used it regularly?

Secretary KERRY. I have no knowledge of what kind of email she had. I was given an email address and I sent it to her.

Mr. ISSA. Did you look at the email address? I mean, was it a .gov and would you have noticed if it wasn't a .gov?

Secretary KERRY. I didn't think about it. I didn't know if she had an account or what the department gave her at that point in time or what she was operating with. I had no knowledge. But let me just say to you—

Mr. ISSA. Okay. No, I appreciate that's a responsive answer that you didn't know you were sending to her personal email from your personal email.

Do you know—at least one of those documents now has been classified secret—do you know when that could be made available in camera to this committee so we'd appreciate what it was about?

Secretary KERRY. I don't know specifically.

Mr. ISSA. Okay. You are aware that it's been classified secret. Is that correct?

Secretary KERRY. I am aware.

Mr. ISSA. Okay. The letter which did not respond to the specific questions occurred on your watch. You've now had your watch for 3 years.

Are you prepared to answer the questions in that letter including who all is using email and what you are doing about it?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Congressman, in principle I'm prepared. I'm prepared to have total accountability and I think we do. Let me just say to you my direction from day one to the entire department has been clear. Get the Clinton emails out of here into the—

Mr. ISSA. And I appreciate that, although it is amazing that we're still waiting for many of them.

Let me ask you just a couple more quick questions and then you can have the remaining time.

Secretary KERRY. I want to finish my answer.

Mr. ISSA. In the case of the use of personal email, we've discovered that additionally many individuals appear to be using text as a method of communication.

Do you use text as a means of communication or do you know of any of your senior staff who use text as a method of communication?

Secretary KERRY. Congressman, let me answer your question by saying this to you. In March of last year I wrote a letter to the inspector general that I hired for the department—

Mr. ISSA. I appreciate that you hired one and that your predecessor never had one.

Secretary KERRY [continuing]. And I asked—I asked the inspector general to look at all of the email practices, communications practices of the department in order to deliver a review and we are working with the IG's observations, which have been helpful, to make sure that the department is living up to the highest—

Mr. ISSA. I appreciate that but there's a pending question, Mr. Secretary, in—

Secretary KERRY. But I don't want to—I'm not going to——

Mr. ISSA. Would you answer the text question, please?

Secretary KERRY. Congressman, I'm not going to get into an email discussion with you here on the budget of our department with all——

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Secretary, this committee is entitled to know the communication and——

Secretary KERRY. And our communications process is thoroughly being analyzed by the inspector general.

Mr. ISSA. I have a pending——

Secretary KERRY. And we have had countless communications——

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Secretary, I appreciate that. It's a simple pending question. Do you text or do you know of other individuals in your senior staff who use text?

Secretary KERRY. I have no idea whether they do or don't. I occasionally——

Mr. ISSA. Okay. And do you use text?

Secretary KERRY [continuing]. I occasionally text some of the people.

Mr. ISSA. And the final question is how are you seeing that that text which by definition is required to be saved under the FOIA requirements under the Federal Records Act, how are you seeing that those texts are preserved since they are not otherwise preserved?

Secretary KERRY. That is precisely what we are working on within our process today to make sure that everything—and by the way, I don't text anything regarding policy.

I only text my logistical administering staff with respect to whether I'm arriving at somewhere or going something. There's nothing substantive ever texted.

Mr. ISSA. Well, I would certainly assume that your private email to Hillary's private email also was intended to to be——

Secretary KERRY. Yeah, but that's secured. All emails are on the server that is the State Department and it's all preserved. It's all part of the national records and that's——

Mr. ISSA. I appreciate that, Mr. Secretary. But Hillary Clinton's were not and your personal email was not when a secret exchange occurred.

Secretary KERRY. Well, I know. But you're fixated—you know, you're fixated on this. I don't know how many investigations there are. I think people are really getting bored with it, Congressman.

There are an awful lot of important discussions, policies, and other things and that's what I'm here to discuss.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Secretary, I appreciate that.

But as I said earlier, this is not about any of the investigations. This is about the work that was being done related to the Federal Records Act and compliance.

It absolutely is more about whether the American people can get what they're entitled to under a law that you, quite frankly——

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Chairman, I would note that the gentleman's time has expired.

Secretary KERRY. I have taken unprecedented steps including with the inspector general to make certain that that is fully adhered to and I stand by the steps we've taken.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker—Chairman.

Mr. McCAUL. I appreciate the promotion.

The Chair recognizes the ranking member.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the memo of the Inspector General Linick, February 3, 2016, where he noted that Secretary Powell and Secretary Rice's staff used private emails as well. I really think we should be consistent and not just have a political attack on Hillary Clinton.

Mr. ISSA. As long as we can enter into the record, Mr. Chairman, the——

Mr. McCAUL. Well, let me just say——

Mr. ISSA. I reserve the point.

Mr. McCAUL [continuing]. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. ISSA. I reserve a point.

Mr. McCAUL. The Chair has recognized the ranking member.

Mr. ENGEL. May I tell the gentleman this is not the Oversight Committee? This is the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. ISSA. I appreciate that and the only thing that I ask is that——

Mr. McCAUL. Gentleman is recognized.

Mr. ISSA [continuing]. Alongside that that the information where each of the former Secretaries made their accompanying statements including Secretary Powell saying that they were not classified I'm happy to have the record complete.

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Chairman, point of order. Mr. Chairman, point of order.

Mr. McCAUL. Mr. Keating is recognized.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just wanted to know for those of us that are waiting to ask questions how much time is the Secretary allocated to this meeting?

Mr. McCAUL. He's here until 12:30 and so with that the Chair recognizes Ms. Frankel from Florida.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Mr. Secretary, I want to just thank you for your service. I'm very proud to have you as our Secretary of State and I just want to in a most respectful way really object to my colleague's litigating the 2016 Presidential contest here in this foreign affairs meeting and I think there's some more important things to discuss other than Hillary Clinton's emails.

Specifically, I'd like to talk about what's happening in Syria and I would first ask you if you could very specifically detail the type of suffering that is going on and how many people are involved.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Congresswoman, thank you.

Syria represents the most significant humanitarian catastrophe and movement of people, deprivation of rights, slaughter since World War II.

There are 12½ million people or so who are displaced or refugees, about 4½ million refugees, more than 2 million in Jordan, million something in Lebanon and 2 million or so in Turkey.

Massive numbers of people, as we've seen—almost a million already—who have entered into Europe, sometimes 5,000, 10,000 a day trying to move across the border.

But what has happened in Syria itself the slaughter by Assad of his own people, the barrel bombs that have been dropped on schools, on kids, on innocent civilians, the torture which has been documented in vivid photographs, grotesque——

Ms. FRANKEL. And is it still occurring as we speak?

Secretary KERRY. Well, the slaughter is still occurring. The innocent people being killed, the bombs that have dropped on hospitals and on schools that has obviously occurred, which is why we have pushed so hard to try to get a cessation of hostilities.

But the combination of torture—of not just the torture but of starvation, communities that have been laid under siege, people who haven't seen food supplies, medical supplies in years now——

Ms. FRANKEL. And children out of school?

Secretary KERRY. Children out of school, people walking around looking like skeletons like people in the liberation of the concentration camps of World War II.

This is horrendous beyond description, and the beheadings, the death by fire, and the elimination of certain people by virtue of who they are, this is really a sad tragic moment for a world that hoped that we were moving to a new order of rule of law and of possibilities for young people and so forth.

So it's really——

Ms. FRANKEL. So let me just follow up on that.

If you could give us a prognosis. How long do you think it will be until these millions of people can either get back to a normal life in any way?

Secretary KERRY. It will be when Russia, Iran, the parties at the table of the International Syria Support Group including the United States and our European allies and our Gulf State friends and Turkey and Egypt and others come to the table ready to implement the Geneva communique which requires a transitional government which is precisely what we are trying to do.

Ms. FRANKEL. So let me——

Secretary KERRY. That is the moment where things could begin to turn conceivably for the better. But it's going to be very difficult.

Ms. FRANKEL. And once you get to that point is that where you then envision at—trying to go after ISIL or Daesh, as you call them?

Secretary KERRY. No. We're going after Daesh now as powerfully as possible, given the difficult circumstances of the country.

It would be much better if we were able to get a transition government in place, according to the Geneva structure, and then have the United States and Russia and all of the parties focus on Daesh and Nusra and be able to join together.

The difficulty with that is with Assad there and the suspicion about intent by some countries simply to shore up Assad, it's impossible to be able to do that sufficiently until you have resolved this process or at least sufficiently engaged in that process and are far enough down the road that you then can license the ability to have a kind of cooperative effort on Daesh. The cooperative effort could end Daesh very, very quickly.

Ms. FRANKEL. But that will require ground forces, you believe?

Secretary KERRY. Well, the ground forces are there. You have the Syrian army. If you have an ability to be able to bring people to-

gether around a transition government you have plenty of people on the ground who can then join together and together the forces from the air and the ground can quickly deal with the problem of Daesh.

That's why dealing with the question of Assad is so critical. People aren't sitting around caught up in this notion that just because people said Assad has to go that's why we're sticking with the policy.

It's because if Assad is there you cannot end the war. As long as Assad is there the people supporting the opposition, the countries that are defending their right not to live under a dictator are going to continue to support those people.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Scott Perry of Pennsylvania.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, thank you for your time today.

I'd like to try and take it back to something regarding the budget. My question—first question deals with the United Nations Relief and Work Agency in regard to our support of the Palestinians.

To my knowledge, the American taxpayer spends about \$277 million per year between the Fiscal Year 2009 and 2015 to support these programs.

Meanwhile, UNRWA staff unions, including the teachers union, are frequently controlled by members affiliated with Hamas. The curriculum of UNRWA schools which use the textbooks of their respective host governments or authorities has long contained materials that are anti-Israel, anti-Semitic, and supportive of violent extremism.

Now, despite UNRWA's contravention of the United States law and activities that compromise its strictly humanitarian mandate—its strictly humanitarian mandate—UNRWA continues to receive United States contributions including \$408 million in 2014.

Just wondering if you could quickly sum up for us how your department is using this funding and your budget to discourage these activities. Taxpayers are loathe for paying for terrorism, terrorist activities, and support of terrorism, and I know you know this.

Secretary KERRY. Absolutely, and not only know that, I mean, the bottom line is it's disgraceful and it's unacceptable and we've made that clear and so have the leadership, by the way, of UNRWA. They have—and the United Nations. There is now—has been very strict policy and procedure in place in order to prevent this kind of activity to ensure neutrality to prevent the funds and programs from benefitting any terrorist activity, obviously, and we—

Mr. PERRY. But how does that—with all due respect, how is that manifested? You say we have policies in place but yet they continue to do it and the American taxpayer continues to fund this organization. So how—

Secretary KERRY. Well, yes. And the people who have done it need to be fired and/or, you know—

Mr. PERRY. But are they, sir?

Secretary KERRY. They should be.

Mr. PERRY. How do we ensure accountability? How do you take that money and say to these folks you're not getting the money? How do you use the leverage that—

Secretary KERRY. Well, we have pushed UNRWA as a result of what happened to condemn racism and to assess every allegation that has been brought to the agency about this misbehavior and misconduct, and in those cases in which investigations have found that misconduct occurred the staff are subject to remedial and disciplinary action and that's what they have promised us is taking place.

Mr. PERRY. Is it ever considered to just withdraw the funding until we see a good faith effort?

Secretary KERRY. Well, the problem is—yes, it's been considered and in a couple of cases it's been mandated, and the problem is we don't get back.

I mean, we've lost our vote at UNESCO, as I think you know, because of activities beyond our control which the Palestinians engaged in by going to the U.N. and seeking membership.

And as a result of that, we are hurt. We don't have a vote. We didn't control their action. It wasn't a deterrent. But we have now lost our ability to be able to protect Israel to stand up and fight within the mechanisms.

So I think being draconian about it is not the best way to do it. We're being successful right now in being able to hold people accountable and I think that's the best way to proceed.

Mr. PERRY. And I appreciate the effort. I just—I see it differently. I don't think anybody is being held accountable and I would just beseech you that the Federal Government's \$19 trillion in debt.

The taxpayers are under siege and we don't have money to waste on organizations that support terrorism and that's just how I see it.

But I would just ask you to consider that more than maybe you have. Moving on, looking at your budget, it looks like last year we spent about \$300 million on the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and associated programs, and with what we see in Syria it seems to me that the American taxpayer is rightly—I mean, we want to do our part.

We don't want to see anything—we don't want to see the horrific things happen to these people, the women and the children, and we want to do our part to be good neighbors and good stewards in the world.

That having been said, these folks are coming to our shores and then school districts and hospitals and taxpayers pay doubly.

I sent a letter to the administration asking why we haven't pursued a safe zone in the border region of Syria and Turkey as some kind of a program or a strategy to make sure that they're not refugees far from their country.

Can you enlighten us at all whether that's—because I haven't gotten a response whatsoever. Is that even a consideration?

Secretary KERRY. That's been very much a consideration, Congressman, and it's a lot more complicated than it, obviously, sounds.

If you're going to have a safe zone within Syria itself it has to be exactly that. It has to be safe. How do you make it safe? How do you prevent a Syrian air force barrel bomber from flying over?

Well, you got to have aircraft in the air. You got to take away their air defenses as a result. How do you prevent Daesh from coming in and attacking or the Syrian army from coming in and attacking?

It has to be safe. That means somewhere between 15,000 to 30,000 troops have to be on the ground in order to make it safe. That's the judgement of the Defense Department.

Now, are we prepared to put that on the ground? I mean, I've heard these calls for a safe zone.

Mr. PERRY. I'm not calling for American troops to be on the ground. We're already flying in the area, as you know.

Secretary KERRY. Right, and who is going to make it safe? Right now safety is found by going to Jordan or getting to that berm where there are about 15,000 people trying to get into Jordan and trying to make them safe there or getting to Turkey or getting to Lebanon. That's safety.

Or trying to get to Europe. What we're trying to do is make it safe by getting a cessation of hostilities in place, getting humanitarian assistance delivered and getting a political process that could actually end the violence. That's the safest thing of all—

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield.

Secretary KERRY [continuing]. And it doesn't require, we hope, thousands of troops on the ground to be able to provide a safe zone.

Chairman ROYCE. Ami Bera of California.

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Obviously, this is a difficult time in the world. Multiple complexities, multiple challenges in the world.

But I'm going to shift to south Asia where we certainly have some opportunities but also some challenges. You know, it is a time of unprecedented increasing relationships between the United States and India. So lots of positive movement there.

One area of complexity though is, you know, the pending sale of F-16 fighters to Pakistan and, you know, given Pakistan's continued support of terrorism throughout the region but certainly—you know, we saw recent terrorist attacks in India in January at the Air Force Base.

At a time when we're seeing progress in U.S.-India relationships, understanding the complexity of the region, understanding we do have vested interests in helping Pakistan fight terrorists.

I'd be curious from your perspective if Pakistan is doing enough separating good terrorists versus bad terrorists and enough domestically within Pakistan to fight these terrorist threats that not just threaten to destabilize India but also, you know, our interest in Afghanistan as well.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Congressman, thank you.

First of all, thank you for your thoughts about India and the sensitivity there and we acknowledge that.

We've been really working hard building the relationship and trying to advance even the rapprochement between India and Pakistan and we encourage that. I think it's required courage by both leaders to engage in the dialogue that they've engaged in.

And needless to say, we don't want to do things that upset the balance. But we do believe that Pakistan is engaged legitimately in a very tough fight against identifiable terrorists in their country that threaten Pakistan and they've got about 150,000 to 180,000 troops out in the western part of their country.

They've been engaged in north Waziristan in a long struggle to clear the area and move people out and they've made some progress in that.

Is it enough, in our judgment? No. We think that more could be done. We're particularly concerned about the sanctuary components of Pakistan and we're particularly concerned about some individual entities in Pakistan that have been supportive of relationships with some of the people that we consider extremely dangerous to our interests in Afghanistan and elsewhere—the Haqqani network a prime example of that.

So there's a balance. But the F-16s have been a critical part of the Pakistani fight against the terrorists in the western part of their country and have been effective in that fight and Pakistan has lost some 50,000 people in the last years including troops to the terrorists that are threatening Pakistan itself.

So it's always complicated. We try to be sensitive to the balance, obviously, with respect to India but we think the F-16s are an important part of Pakistan's ability to do that.

Mr. BERA. Great. Let me shift now. As one of the few physicians in Congress I do have a real interest in global health and looking at the current threat of Zika virus.

You know, we're grateful to have Dr. Frieden and Dr. Fauci and representatives of USAID in committee a few weeks ago. As we're looking at Zika and as we're gathering, you know, information I know the President has requested \$1.8 billion.

One thing, as a physician, you know we know and very much so are recommending if you're pregnant, if you're of reproductive age, to take all precautions.

Obviously, the one thing that we do know is making access to full family planning services available in areas where we know there's endemic Zika and, you know, within USAID's purview, within the \$1.8 billion request I'd be curious—again, the one thing that's empowering women of childbearing age to have full family planning support services, whether that's birth control, whether that's—you know, we're seeing increasing cases of sexual transmitted Zika virus as well.

So I'd be curious and I would want to make sure that we are providing the full resources in these endemic countries.

Secretary KERRY. We are doing an enormous amount, Congressman, and I really appreciate the expertise you bring as a physician and your concern about this.

The President is extremely focused on the Zika virus challenge. The White House National Security Council is actually coordinating the all of government response on this and together, with the World Health Organization with whom we are working very closely in its regional offices for the Americas, for the Pan American Health Organization, we're working with relevant international organizations and others.

The President has emphasized the need to accelerate researcher efforts to make better diagnostic tests available, to develop vaccines, medicines, improve mosquito control measures, and ensure that all citizens have the information that they need in order to be able to deal with the virus.

So we are using multiple lines of effort—an all out effort. We do not want this, obviously, to become as challenging as ebola was and, as you know, we mounted a response to that and the same kind of effort is being put into this.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Ron DeSantis of Florida.

Mr. DESANTIS. Good morning, Mr. Secretary.

Congress recently passed a trade authority bill that, among other provisions, instructed our trade negotiators to oppose any boycotts of Israel including persons doing business in Israel or in Israel-controlled territories.

And yet your spokesman recently said that the State Department rejects that provision and does not believe that Congress can conflate Israel with disputed territories.

So my question is is why won't the administration honor Congress' enactment.

Secretary KERRY. Well, I'm not sure exactly what statement you're referring to or what happened with respect to that. I think we do honor legislation. But——

Mr. DESANTIS. So you would say your negotiators—if a European country was saying that they wanted to boycott people or businesses that are——

Secretary KERRY. We don't—we don't support——

Mr. DESANTIS [continuing]. Doing business over the green line you think you would not fight against that?

Secretary KERRY. We do not support any boycott efforts. We've been openly opposed to them. We opposed them at the U.N. We're opposed to them elsewhere. We oppose labeling. We don't believe that's——

Mr. DESANTIS. So you—so you don't—well, good. Well, maybe he was not——

Secretary KERRY. That's why I said I don't know what the response is that——

Mr. DESANTIS. Okay. Good. Because I think that that's great.

Well, the labeling though I'd like to follow up on that because your spokesman, Mr. Kirby, said that the U.S. doesn't oppose labeling of Israeli products from the disputed territories.

And so State Department does not view labeling as a boycott of Israel. And the problem with that is, you know, once you go down the road of doing the labeling that's really a precondition for countries to be able to boycott Israel.

So he suggested that the State Department is not opposed to European efforts to require Israel to label goods that are outside of the green line.

Are you saying that that's not the position?

Secretary KERRY. Well, labeling—we don't do—no, that kind of labeling actually—I mean, we require labeling of where people send goods from.

We require labeling of goods that come into the United States.

Mr. DESANTIS. But if someone sends it from a Jewish community outside of the green line and they say made in Israel, the State Department's position for him would be like it was fine—it would be fine to force them to say that that was produced in the West Bank.

Secretary KERRY. Yes. Labeling it from the West Bank is not equivalent of a boycott.

Mr. DESANTIS. But it sets a precondition for a boycott.

Secretary KERRY. Labeling is equivalent of knowledge to people so that they can, you know, have the information about where products come from which we require also, by the way.

You know, we have Made in America, Made in China.

Mr. DESANTIS. But I think it sets the—but these are disputed territories and you have Jewish communities there where they're producing goods and they label it as made in Israel.

Secretary KERRY. I understand that, which is why we are opposed—we are opposed to any boycotts or any efforts to isolate Israel based on where—we're opposed to that.

Mr. DESANTIS. Well, good. I think you—I mean, I appreciate you saying that forthrightly because I think we've been getting mixed signals from the State Department.

In terms of funding, over the last several years about \$1 million has gone to this new Israel fund and that's an organization that supports BDS. Do you think it's appropriate that money that the State Department is dispensing in grants be used for organizations that support BDS?

Secretary KERRY. I'm not familiar with that. It's news to me and I'll take it under advisement and review it.

Mr. DESANTIS. We'll get that. There's a movement to boycott Israel on a lot of college campuses throughout the United States.

Do you view that as helpful for America's diplomatic relations with Israel and other nations in the world and do you think it's appropriate that U.S. taxpayers are funding universities that take an official position in favor of BDS?

Secretary KERRY. I believe in academic freedom. I believe in student freedom to take positions. It's a time honored tradition in the United States of America that we don't punish positions people take—

Mr. DESANTIS. What about an institutional position?

Secretary KERRY. We, as a government, make our position clear that we do not believe it is helpful to be boycotting. But people have the right in America, thank God, to be able to make their own decisions and we as a government do not punish students for the—

Mr. DESANTIS. Well, I don't think it would be punishing students. I think it would be if the university adopted an official position that they were going to boycott Israel would then—we would want to subsidize that with taxpayer dollars.

Secretary KERRY. I also—that's, obviously, a debate for Congress. But I would not advocate or support any challenge to the freedom of the university to make its own decisions and I think punishing them would be in appropriate.

Mr. DESANTIS. Now, money that goes to the Palestinian Authority directly under Federal law requires the State Department to certify that the Palestinian authority is acting to counter incite-

ment of violence against the Israelis and I've noticed that the last several years the State Department has not made that certification. Is that correct?

Secretary KERRY. I wasn't aware we hadn't certified the last couple of years but we are following constantly the incitement issue.

I just met with President Abbas and raised the issue with him a couple weeks ago and we are working through our relationships and constant engagement on the West Bank to make sure that the incitement is not taking place in any official ways.

Mr. DESANTIS. I think the worry is is that the certification has not been made so that would prohibit funds directly. But the State Department has been directing funds to the Israelis to pay down the Palestinian debts. And the question is, is that trying to get around the spirit of the law?

Secretary KERRY. No, it's trying to sustain the one entity in the West Bank that is committed to peaceful resolution and to non-violence and to two-state solution.

The fact is that there are many, many difficulties financially in the PA's ability to be able to meet its needs for education, for health, for the standard process of trying to govern the West Bank.

And these have been particularly difficult last year and a half or so, as you know, with violence that has risen. We condemn the violence completely.

I might add, I was extremely disturbed to read today that Iran has agreed to pay the families of people who've engaged in violence and people who have been "the martyrs" of the violence that's taken place.

That is completely inappropriate and seems to lend some sort of credibility to that violence and to those choices and I think it's the wrong choice by Iran, and we strongly urge any kind of incitement of any kind and that even in its own way can be a form of incitement.

You're going to have eternal support, the families will be fine and this is okay behavior. It's not okay behavior. But President Abbas is committed to nonviolence.

He is the one leader in the West Bank who has consistently, even in the middle of the violence, even in the middle of the Gaza war previously, condemned violence as a means of trying to achieve the Two States.

We believe that trying to build the Palestinian Authority and give them greater capacity to be able to control their own security, be able to build their capacity is the way to ultimately move toward solving the problem of the violence itself.

Chairman ROYCE. I'll remind the members we need to stick to 5 minutes. And we'll go to Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Secretary for being here with us today.

I'd like to follow up on Dr. Bera's questions with regard to the F-16s in Pakistan. Judge Poe and I recently sent you a letter expressing our grave concerns about this potential sale and asking you to consider stopping it.

In our view, rewarding Pakistan with such a sale when in fact they have not changed their harboring and support of terrorists within Pakistan, whether you talk about the 2011 statements by

Admiral Mullen then talking about how the Haqqani network is a veritable arm of the Pakistani ISI or his statements that the ISI played a direct role in supporting the deadly attack on our Embassy in Kabul in 2011 or to the recent release of the mastermind of the 2008 Mumbai attack, both for security reasons and their actions in supporting these terrorists as well as the relationship that you and others have focused on and recognize as important with India. Is this something that you would be willing to reconsider, given all these factors?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Congresswoman, I'd like to talk to you sort of in a classified setting, if we could, because I think there are some considerations that I can't go into here.

I would say to you that I share the concern, as everybody does—I mean, the President, all of us are deeply concerned about ISI relationships, deeply concerned about the Haqqani network's freedom to be able to have operated and we've had very recent conversations with respect to that.

And I think in fairness, because of the nature of those conversations I'll follow up with you, and I will definitely follow up with you in a way that we can discuss this.

Ms. GABBARD. That would be great. I'd appreciate that.

The last time that I met with you in my district in Hawaii we met at the East-West Center. It's a place that you know has been instrumental in creating dialogues between leaders amongst many of these Asia Pacific nations at a critical time when we're facing potential Destabilization within the South China Sea, North Korea, island nations in the Pacific and the challenges they're facing.

The funding has been reduced this year for the East-West Center. I wonder if you can talk about why that is as well as why the funding was moved from its own line item into education and cultural exchanges and what impact that will have on the center's ability to continue to play this important role in the Asia Pacific region.

Secretary KERRY. The reason, Congresswoman, is there's no policy shift whatsoever in reducing the importance of or the commitment to the East-West Center.

But beginning in 2017 the funding was going to be requested under the ECA appropriation rather than as a separate East-West, you know, Center appropriation as in previous years.

And I think the President's 2017 request is \$10.8 million. You're right, it's below the actual level of 2015 and appropriated level but I think, you know, it reflects just tough choices that we have with the budget that we have.

Not everybody is getting as much as they did the year before. But it is not a reflection of some sort of downward trend.

It reflects the difficulties of the current budget choice and, you know, we will maintain our consistent support for the East-West Center going forward. I can guarantee you that.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I've got a lot more questions. Unfortunately, we don't have much more time.

One issue that I'd like to follow up with you and your staff on is the budget request within your budget that goes toward train and equip programs within both Syria and Iraq and the concern about how those funds are being used, who they're supporting in

training as well as what coordination is occurring between State and the DoD program and other agencies that are using this funding and toward what objective.

You know, the concern we've raised consistently over time about whether or not these funds are being used to overthrow the Syrian Government of Assad versus fighting and defeating Daesh on the ground there and other—al-Qaeda, al-Nusra and these other extremist groups.

We don't have time for this now but this is something I think is important that we want to examine as we look at the budget for the State Department.

Thank you.

Secretary KERRY. Look forward to working with you on it. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

We'll go to David Trott of Michigan.

Mr. TROTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, the Coptic Christians have experienced some of the worst attacks in their modern history and we sent a petition to the White House urging that they designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization.

In a response to that, the administration said we have not seen credible evidence that the Muslim Brotherhood has renounced its decades-long commitment to nonviolence.

Does the administration still believe that the Muslim Brotherhood is a nonviolent organization?

Secretary KERRY. As a whole, it's very hard, obviously, to wrap everybody into the same pot.

There are, clearly, Muslim Brotherhood members who are engaging in violence. We know that, obviously.

Mr. TROTT. So the administration does not recognize them as a terrorist organization. The State Department welcomed them on an official visit last year. Days after—

Secretary KERRY. No. No, that—there was a member or two who were part of the delegation that was that attended and nobody knew, you know, what membership anybody had with respect to that.

Mr. TROTT. Okay. Well, days after their visit they released a statement calling for a long uncompromising jihad in Egypt and 2 days later there was a major attack on the Sinai peninsula.

What should I tell and who should I explain the administration's policies and actions with respect to the Muslim Brotherhood to the 750 Coptic Christian families in my district? How should I explain the actions that we're taking to address the atrocities?

Secretary KERRY. We'll, we're leading the fight. I think you can tell them that there's no country doing as much to fight against violent extremism, to counter violent extremism as the United States.

We are the ones who have put together the global initiative on countering violent extremism. It's a President Obama initiative. He's led it at the United Nations. We've had major conferences and meetings on this issue and all violent extremists are brought into the purview of these efforts as a result of that initiative.

In addition, we're leading the coalition in the fight against Daesh, against al-Qaeda, against anybody appropriately designated as a violent broadly-based organization.

We continue to carefully assess the status of the Muslim Brotherhood writ large as to whether or not it meets the specific legal criteria as set forth in the terrorist organization with designation requirements.

That's—you know, while there are individual members that have engaged in violence and individual branches the organizations writ large under its overall heading has not expressed a commitment to that kind of activity. So it's difficult. How do you—you know, we're looking at it.

Mr. TROTT. Thank you, sir.

Let's switch to the President's plan to close Guantanamo and we haven't received many details about that.

We've heard the cost estimate is \$300 million to \$500 million to do the construction necessary to move the detainees and hold them here. No explanation has been forthcoming in how you resolve the conflict between that plan and the ban to move the detainees under the National Defense Authorization Act.

Two days ago, one of the former detainees was arrested in Spain for apparently plotting to carry out an ISIS attack in Spain.

So at a high level, do you believe that closing the prison in Guantanamo makes America and Americans safer?

Secretary KERRY. Yes, I do. I'm convinced it makes us safer because I think it's been an incredible recruiting tool and I don't think it adheres to the values of our country to have people held in a military prison 14 years after they were "apprehended" without any charges or any evidence.

Mr. TROTT. So you believe the—as far as the recruiting tool, someone gets radicalized and joins ISIS because they are singularly motivated by this terrible situation in the prison in Guantanamo? Is that what drives someone to make that decision?

Secretary KERRY. Let me ask you something. Do you remember seeing people in orange jumpsuits in the desert having their heads cut off? Where do you think the orange jumpsuit came from? They came from Guantanamo. That was the image across the Arab World.

So yes, unequivocally, it is not accident.

Mr. TROTT. And is Guantanamo—the naval base in Guantanamo—is it going to end up like the Panama Canal? If we move the detainees out of there is there going to—

Secretary KERRY. No discussion—

Mr. TROTT [continuing]. Any plan to close that and give it to Cuba?

Secretary KERRY. No discussion. I would personally be opposed to that. There's no discussion that I'm aware of. No, that is not what is at stake here.

What is at stake here is living up to our values. I mean, it seems to me—

Mr. TROTT. We can live up to our values without closing the prison though. We can just correct the mistakes that were made and make sure they don't happen again.

Secretary KERRY. I think Guantanamo now has such a imprint in the world and as I said, those jumpsuits didn't come out to the imagination of Daesh. They came out of the images of Guantanamo. I believe we need to——

Mr. TROTT. And last question since I'm running out of time——

Chairman ROYCE. We're out of time but the last questions could be in writing.

We go to Brian Higgins of New York.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, the continent of Africa—in 55 countries, a population of 1 billion people. That population is expected to double by the year 2015. And a lot of failed states, particularly in central Africa.

We see the introduction of ISIS in Libya. We see the terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria and we see the tearing apart of the newest country in the world, in South Sudan, with a population of some 11 million people.

The U.N. reported that in South Sudan soldiers with government uniforms were entering United Nations mission in South Sudan, a protection of civilian camps, firing on civilians and killing many of them, creating great instability.

So I think when you look at, you know, particularly the activity of nonstate terrorist actors—ISIS and Boko Haram, which seemingly are now moving toward—away from the traditional ways of gaining revenue and toward territorial control, to tax, to charge protection of people, the continent of Africa, I think, poses great, great challenges to the United States.

What in this budget and what is the vision for the Department of State with respect to continuing and rebuilding that continent which, I think, has a lot of trouble spots right now?

Secretary KERRY. That's a great question and I really appreciate it.

I would say just about everything that we're doing with respect to our development policy, our countering violent extremism policy, our aid policy, our military to military assistance policy is all directed at this. We're deeply, deeply involved.

The President was in Africa. I was in Africa. We had many of our cabinet Secretaries traveling there. We're working on Power Africa because we are trying to get electricity into communities that don't have electricity so they can begin to develop and provide health capacity, provide education and fill the void that exists for a lot of young people who otherwise get their heads filled in a very calculated strategy by extremists to reach them.

When I was—let me give you an example—when I was in Ethiopia, in Addis Ababa, I met with the Foreign Minister there and I asked him, you know, how they managed their sort of 30, 35 percent population that is Muslim.

And he said increasingly they were concerned about it because what happens is an extremist cell will go out and target young poor kids and pays them initially and they would pay them and then bring them in, proselytize, fill their heads with this distortion and then they don't need to pay them anymore because they're ready to operate based on what's been, you know, washed into them, what's been inculcated into them.

And then they go out and start replicating this recruitment process. And what he said to me is they don't have a 5-year plan.

They have a 35-year plan. They're ready to keep building this. And so, you know, we have to think about this, I believe, and this is what the President is trying to embrace in his countering violent extremism strategy, that we've got to recognize that failed or failing states that have no revenue, that can't build a school, that can't provide health, that can't organize the community, that can't even build their own security structure to fight back against these radicals are going to require some help.

Now, after World War II we had a thing called the Marshall Plan where we rebuilt countries that had fallen into absolute economic despair as a consequence of the war and even rebuilt our former enemies—Japan and Germany.

Look at the difference it has made today. That is the greatest success story statement about why investment and why this engagement is critical.

In Africa, we need to engage more. We need to be able to help them. We're fighting—helping Nigeria now deal with Boko Haram. We're fighting to push back against al-Shabaab in Somalia. We have a U.N. mission in Somalia.

It needs more help. It needs more people, more assistance. We had al-Shabaab on the ropes last summer. But now there's sort of reductions and so they push back.

This is a long-term constant struggle and I believe that the security of the United States of America is absolutely at stake in the choices we make in order to fill—help fill these voids. Not do it alone.

The work through these global institutions in order to push back against this potential vacuum that invites failure and violence and extremism to fill the void. And I hope people will see this budget in that entire context. There are so many different things, what we're doing on AIDS, what we did with Ebola, what we do in terms of our broad based entrepreneurial encouragement, what we do with the program the President started for young African leaders in order to bring them here and help them to train and learn.

All of these things are good solid investments for the long-term future and security of our country.

Chairman ROYCE. I go to Mr. Lee Zeldin of New York.

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Secretary, thank you for coming back in front of the committee. I wanted to discuss the Iran nuclear agreement.

The President has stated that the nuclear agreement is not based on trust but is based on verification. This past Monday I received a letter from your talented Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs. I just wanted to discuss a couple of components of that. Thank you for the response.

In the letter, it says that the Iran nuclear agreement “relies on the unprecedented monitoring and verification measures.” The letter further refers to “an unprecedented IAEA monitoring and surveillance” and legally binding obligations under the additional protocol to Iran's safeguards agreement with the IAEA.

My first question, Mr. Secretary, is have you read the Iran's safeguards agreement with the IAEA?

Secretary KERRY. Yes.

Mr. ZELDIN. And how can—how can I access that?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I've been briefed on it, put it that way. It was read by our staff when we were there. I didn't read the entire thing but I was briefed full on what the contents are.

Mr. ZELDIN. Has the President read it?

Secretary KERRY. I can't speak to that. I don't know. I don't think so because I think it's in Vienna.

Mr. ZELDIN. There's actually—if you visit the IAEA Web site they have a link to access the Iran safeguards agreement. When you click the link it goes to the next page and it says sorry, the information—it's some type of a broken link.

But I would be interested in reading that safeguards agreement. Would that be possible?

Secretary KERRY. I don't know. I think that's part of—what? Yeah, that's the part—there's a—the safeguards component we were briefed on and we worked on and we were satisfied with. But it is part of—it's a confidential—it is always traditionally between every country including us, we have an agreement. But ours is confidential. Other countries can't go read our agreement with the IAEA and that's the way the IAEA works.

But we, as I say, were briefed on it so that we had a sense of what was included, what needed to be included was satisfied because it was critical in the context of this. But we don't possess it.

Mr. ZELDIN. The members of your staff have read it. You haven't asked to read it yourself?

Secretary KERRY. No. I was fully briefed on it at the time. I was in Vienna and I was there on the last—obviously, on the last day. This was of high concern to us. I believe then Under Secretary Wendy Sherman and others went over and met with the IAEA and then they came back and briefed me out on it. But I didn't feel that it was imperative at that point.

Mr. ZELDIN. And you feel comfortable stating that there's unprecedented IAEA monitoring and surveillance and verification measures—

Secretary KERRY. With one caveat, yes. With one caveat. There is unprecedented allowance for that full measure of intrusive oversight and access.

The key now will be to plus up the IAEA budget. We have the license for 130 or so additional inspectors to be permanently in Iran. There's a permanent office in Iran. But the IAEA is going to need resourcing to meet this.

Now, we've always banked on the fact that's got to happen and it will happen. But I just want to signal that that is an imperative component of this.

Mr. ZELDIN. You know, I'm just—I'm concerned when there are reports that start coming out that says that the Iranians collect their own soil samples, that the Iranians inspect some of their own nuclear sites and we have this opportunity to have the Secretary here in front of the committee and these are very concerning reports.

I would love to be able to get confirmation as to whether or not you've read that in there.

Secretary KERRY. We have the right under the agreement, under the assumption of the additional protocol, the additional protocol you can read that is—that is a public document.

The additional protocol was negotiated by the IAEA, was put in place as a consequence of what failed in the framework agreement with respect to North Korea.

And the lesson of that was there has to be the ability to follow up and have access in order to investigate any suspected or suspicious sites.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Secretary, I apologize.

Secretary KERRY. So—no, I'll just finish quickly.

So we have a right of access. The IAEA has a right of access for any suspicious site not to be collected by the others, not—that they themselves have the right of access.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Secretary, why don't you ask for a signature for Iran on the nuclear agreement? Why didn't you ask Iran to sign the nuclear agreement?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I believe they did sign.

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, the letter that you sent said it's not a signed agreement. I mean, it specifically states, as a matter of fact, that—

Secretary KERRY. It was signed—it was signed—excuse me. Iran did sign. The Vice President of Iran, Ali Saleh, went over to the IAEA and signed the agreement at the IAEA headquarters.

Mr. ZELDIN. Okay. Just—

Secretary KERRY. He signed it the morning before the implementation before the agreement was announced.

Mr. ZELDIN. The reason why I was asking is it says that JCPOA is not a treaty or an executive agreement.

Secretary KERRY. That's accurate.

Mr. ZELDIN. It is not—and it is not a signed document.

Secretary KERRY. That is accurate. It's not a treaty. It is a political agreement. But the actual agreement between the IAEA and Iran is signed and that is a legal obligation.

Mr. ZELDIN. But the Iran nuclear agreement, the JCPOA, the P5+1, whatever we call it, is not signed by—

Secretary KERRY. That is a political agreement, correct. But it is—

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, the question is why—

Secretary KERRY. Whoa, whoa, whoa.

Mr. ZELDIN. Why didn't we ask Iran to sign it?

Secretary KERRY. Because it is a political agreement with force of law behind it—international law—because it has been embraced in and fully adopted by the United Nations and the United Nations Security Council. So that is why it has force of law and that is why the snap back is a particularly forceful provision in the context.

Chairman ROYCE. We need to go to Mr. William Keating of Massachusetts.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for your service, Mr. Secretary.

As ranking member on the Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade Subcommittee in this committee, I want to focus on terrorism for the purpose of this questioning.

And I want to really focus on the fact that this is a budget hearing and one thing I'm aware of and I think most experts agree with, taxpayers get the most—it's most cost effective for taxpayers and most experts will say most effective—is the work that we do in those areas where terrorism is likely to incubate, maybe just starting to incubate or moving out and metastasizing. I just want you to comment on a couple of things.

Number one, we had King Abdullah here talking to some of the members of the committee a while ago and he identified 17 fronts, which we generally agreed upon in the world, where ISIL and other groups are a great threat.

But if you could, I just want, if you could comment on some of the areas where it's ripe for incubation or incubation in the world, what those geographic areas would be, whether it's Indonesia, Somalia, Bangladesh—you know, areas that we might not think of.

Number two, how we approach that is so important and it's important for this hearing this morning because I think the most effective things we can do in those areas before things incubate, before they metastasize is to look at what we can do as a country with our resources to intervene.

Now, I think, clearly, you touched upon some of the economic areas that we could do it. I also think in terms of human rights, if you could comment on how we're utilizing an increased role for women and mothers in trying to deal with this issue in those type of situations.

And also in terms of the narrative, the extremists—the counter extremists' narrative that we really want to pursue with its broadcast social media, something I think we're getting beaten on a little bit now globally in some areas. So those are the kind of things that we get the most bang for the buck.

And those are the things that keep us the safest and are the most effective. So if you could take a few minutes and comment on geographically where you think there are some areas of concentration we may not think of first off the top of our heads and how we can deal with it economically from a human rights perspective and from a counter extremist narrative.

Secretary KERRY. You know, Congressman, I really appreciate the question and I want to try to answer it carefully because I don't want the speculation or statement to become the father to the fact.

Mr. KEATING. I understand.

Secretary KERRY. So I don't want to run through a whole bunch of potential incubator locations that some people may not have thought about yet.

But I think generically I would simply say to you that where you have a poor population, where you have a bad governance, where you have corruption, where you have a lack of opportunity, a lack of education, and you have a population that may be particularly susceptible to a religious extortion—distorted narrative you have potential, obviously. And there are plenty of places where, unfortunately what I just described is the fact today.

Now, the key here is the latter part of your question dealing with the narrative, because the narrative left unattended can be very attractive.

Where you have corruption and where you have lack of opportunity and if a void gets filled with that narrative without the truth, without, you know, facts to the contrary, it can start to take hold and it has and it does and we see that in various places.

So we are now very, very focused. Part of our strategy to fight Daesh, al-Qaeda, and others, is to do a much better job with the counter narrative.

Under Secretary Rick Stengel has been deeply involved in this, working with other countries, working with our best young talented communicators in America beginning to fight back on the social media, for instance.

There is a center that is opened in the Emirates, in Abu Dhabi—the Sawab Center—that the Emirates is engaged in and supporting, which has a bunch of young folks in there and obviously mostly Arabic speaking and other language speaking who are able to communicate the counter narrative.

We've actually taken people who are disaffected from Daesh and put them on the social media who have told the story of how they were exploited, raped, or made slaves and somehow they have—by the way, many of those have been executed when they are disaffected and try to leave.

But those who have made it out are powerful testimony to the contrary.

So we're doing a lot of that. Saudi Arabia is about to open a similar communication center. Malaysia will, others. So there are lots of places where the communications effort is as critical as anything in preventing future recruits from being created and we're working very hard at that.

Chairman ROYCE. I need to go to Mr. Jeff Duncan of South Carolina.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Kerry, you seem to have an affinity for Iran that I don't share. Going back to 1979, Iran has shown a strong animosity for America.

They regularly chant death to America and recently tried to humiliate United States sailors. They're the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism and we just gave them billions of dollars, upwards of \$150 billion which they could possibly use to continue to export terrorism around the globe.

Will we ever learn? I just hope that that lesson, that incumbent the cost of American lives through an act of terror backed by Iran.

I'd love to go back to something Chairman McCaul was touching on earlier and that's H.R. 158, the Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act.

There were three areas that were exceptions under the law. Military service, government travel, and national security and law enforcement were exceptions for the visa waiver issue.

During the negotiations, as the chairman pointed out, the State Department asked for other exemptions and they were explicitly denied in the law signed by the President.

So in that, Mr. Secretary, there are national security and law enforcement waivers. Could you please define for me your interpretation of national security and law enforcement?

Secretary KERRY. Sure. Let me just, if I can, with your indulgence I just want to make it clear I don't have an affinity for any country that is engaged in activities that are counter to our values and that put our people at risk and that are supporting terror.

There's no affinity whatsoever. My job as the Secretary of State and as a diplomat is to try to find solutions to problems that don't involve, if at possible and we can achieve our goals, sending young people into conflict—going to war.

War is the failure of diplomacy to solve a problem. So we looked at Iran and we saw them about to be putting us in a situation where they may have the nuclear weapon, which would be bad for everybody in the world, particularly our friends closest to them.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Secretary, I appreciate you making that clear.

Secretary KERRY. So I just want to make clear—

Mr. DUNCAN. But I also understand you sent a letter after the visa waiver program law was passed—

Secretary KERRY. Explaining that it didn't violate JCPOA.

Mr. DUNCAN. So explain to me—define national security and law enforcement, if you don't mind.

Secretary KERRY. Sure. We have an interest, obviously, in being able to guarantee that Iran, over a period of time, or any other country may be able to change—may be able to move to a different posture and our belief is from a national security point of view that if people are able to do legitimate business that over a period of time that changes things.

We look at what's happening in Vietnam today, for instance, or we look at what's happening in Burma, other countries. Transformation takes place and we believe that transformation is in the national security interests of our country and some of it comes from entrepreneurial activity being able to take place where people begin to feel better about life, see that they're not threatened, do better, travel, see the world and so forth.

Mr. DUNCAN. Right.

Secretary KERRY. So in terms of travel, in terms of travel—

Mr. DUNCAN. Reclaiming my time. That's a good answer, sir, but let me—let me reference a—

Secretary KERRY. We have—we have people—we have friends—

Mr. DUNCAN. Reclaiming my time.

Let me reference a white paper that State Department put out, sir, that says as discussed in the legal paper, which we've asked for a copy of the legal paper referencing this white paper and have not seen that yet.

But it says as discussed in the legal paper this is a lesser standard. National security and law enforcement is a lesser standard—the department's words, not mine—than was imposed by other statutes that require a finding that a waiver is vital to or essential to the national security interests of the United States.

Furthermore, there are no findings of fact or other determinations required to be made before an exercise of the waiver authority.

Additionally, as discussed in the legal paper yet to be seen, the national security waiver can be exercised by category, not just individuals.

So you're going to broaden this to humanitarian and other categories that you all asked for during the negotiations which were explicitly denied by Congress in the law.

Secretary KERRY. What we're doing, Congressman, we're not—I think we've adhered to the discussions that we had because we're not doing a blanket waiver.

We're doing—these are individual case-by-case basis. So we're not doing some blanket waiver and I think that's, frankly, not only adhering to the standard but it's in our interest.

I mean, we have people—you know, the principal threat that we are concerned about of terror from Daesh is not coming out of Iran.

It's coming out of other places, and if some European business person or an NGO that happens to be advocating human rights travels to Iran and they have a visa waiver with us, which by the way has an extraordinarily rigorous standard before it's given, we don't lose any—in fact, we have greater insight on somebody with that than we do in other cases necessary.

Mr. DUNCAN. I'm on Homeland Security. I've followed this issue for a long time. What this white paper looks like, and maybe I'd have a better understanding if you would provide to us a copy of the legal paper—Mr. Secretary, this looks like you all were trying to find wiggle room to work around the intent of Congress and the actual wording of the law.

My time has expired and you can keep talking if the chairman will let you. But I appreciate it.

Secretary KERRY. Where did the white paper come from? I'm sorry. I missed that.

Mr. DUNCAN. It's called the Visa Waiver Program Waiver Recommendation Paper and it's a State Department document and it references in there twice that I know a legal paper which helped to determine your findings here.

Please provide us a copy of the legal paper and maybe this will be a nonissue.

Thank you. I yield back.

Secretary KERRY. Yes, sir. Will do. Okay.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, and we will continue looking at your budget. Your department has many good programs that need to be supported.

But as I said in my statement, even good programs may not be able to get the level of support we'd all wish, given our deficit.

We will work at doing the best job we can with Embassy security a priority and I for one am particularly supportive of your initiatives promoting women's education and social status in the developing world.

On the Iran deal, I'm afraid the dam has been broken with foreign investment rushing in and in the real world it will not be reversible if and when Iran cheats. But that is a continuing discussion.

Mr. Rohrabacher had a question for the record, which will be submitted without objection. It's on the subject of the release of Dr. Afridi. We all hope and want to see Dr. Afridi released immediately.

The problems and threats but also the opportunities we face are great. The committee looks forward to its continued work with you to strengthen our nation's security and thank you again, Mr. Secretary, for being with us today.

Secretary KERRY. A pleasure.

Chairman ROYCE. We stand adjourned.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Whereupon, at 12:44 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

Edward R. Royce (R-CA), Chairman

February 25, 2016

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at <http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov>):

DATE: Thursday, February 25, 2016

TIME: 9:30 a.m.

SUBJECT: Strengthening U.S. Leadership in a Turbulent World: The FY 2017 Foreign Affairs Budget

WITNESS: The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.



COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day Thursday Date 2/25/2016 Room 2172

Starting Time 9:31 Ending Time 12:44

Recesses 0 (to) (to) (to) (to) (to) (to)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Edward R. Royce, Rep. McCaul

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☒

Executive (closed) Session ☐

Televised ☒

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☒

Stenographic Record ☒

TITLE OF HEARING:

Strengthening U.S. Leadership in a Turbulent World: The FY 2017 Foreign Affairs Budget

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

See attached.

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

none

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☒ No ☐

(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

IFR - Ranking Member Eliot Engel

IFR - Rep. Chris Smith

IFR - Rep. Darrell Issa

QFR - Chairman Edward Royce

QFR - Ranking Member Eliot Engel

QFR - Rep. Dana Rohrabacher

QFR - Rep. Brad Sherman

QFR - Rep. Joe Wilson

QFR - Rep. William Keating

QFR - Rep. Michael McCaul

QFR - Rep. David Cicilline

QFR - Rep. Ted Poe

QFR - Rep. Brendan Boyle

QFR - Rep. Matt Salmon

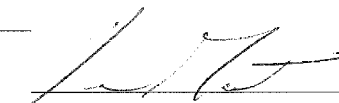
QFR - Rep. Scott Perry

QFR - Rep. David Trott

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____

or

TIME ADJOURNED 12:44



Jean Marter, Director of Committee Operations

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MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE ELIOT L. ENGEL, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK



OIG Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of State • Broadcasting Board of Governors

UNCLASSIFIED

February 3, 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR UNDER SECRETARY KENNEDY

FROM: OIG - Steve A. Linick *SL*

SUBJECT: CLASSIFIED MATERIAL DISCOVERED IN UNCLASSIFIED ARCHIVAL MATERIAL
(ESP-16-02)

The Office of Inspector General's (OIG) Office of Evaluation and Special Projects is currently examining issues associated with records preservation and the use of personal hardware and software by five Secretaries of State (Albright, Powell, Rice, Clinton, and Kerry) and their immediate staff.

During the course of the review, OIG searched unclassified archives and discovered records suggesting instances in which potentially sensitive material may have been transmitted via personal email accounts or other unclassified means to Secretary Powell, or to the personal email accounts of Secretary Rice's immediate staff. None of the material was marked as classified, but the substance of the material and "NODIS" (No Distribution) references in the body or subject lines of some of the documents suggested that the documents could be potentially sensitive. On October 19, 2015, OIG transmitted to the Department and separately to the Inspector General for the Intelligence Committee (ICIG) for classification review 19 separate Office of the Secretary archival documents. The date range on the documents is from February 2003 through June 2008.

On December 15, 2015, the ICIG advised OIG that, according to information management officials in the Intelligence Community (IC) elements, none of the documents contain or contained IC information.

On December 29, 2015, the Department advised OIG that 12 of the 19 documents contain national security information classified at the Secret or Confidential levels based on a review by 9 Department bureaus and offices. Two of these documents were emails sent to Secretary Powell's personal email account and the remaining were documents transmitted to personal email accounts of Secretary Rice's immediate staff.

On January 15, 2016, the Department provided a second response that discusses OIG's query whether the material contained in each classified document was or should have been regarded as classified at the time of transmission or receipt.

UNCLASSIFIED

Based on the Department's responses and findings to date, additional potential classified material and/or highly sensitive information not intended for distribution may reside in the Department's unclassified paper and electronic archives associated with Secretaries Powell and Rice and their respective staff.

Recommendation

OIG recommends that the Department remove classified material from all unclassified paper and electronic archives associated with Secretaries Powell and Rice and their staff.

OIG would appreciate a written response to this memorandum and information on actions taken or planned relevant to the recommendation. The response should indicate agreement or disagreement with the recommendation.

Comments received within 10 business days of the date of this memorandum will be reprinted as an appendix to the memorandum. This memorandum may be posted to the OIG internet and intranet websites.

cc: D(MR) – Heather A. Higginbottom
DS – Gregory B. Starr
A – Joyce A. Barr
I. Charles McCullough, III, Inspector General, Intelligence Community

UNCLASSIFIED

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH,
A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY



Special Report: State Department watered down human trafficking report
WASHINGTON | BY JASON SZEPE AND MATT SPETALNICK
August 3, 2015

In the weeks leading up to a critical annual U.S. report on human trafficking that publicly shames the world's worst offenders, human rights experts at the State Department concluded that trafficking conditions hadn't improved in Malaysia and Cuba. And in China, they found, things had grown worse.

The State Department's senior political staff saw it differently — and they prevailed.

A Reuters examination, based on interviews with more than a dozen sources in Washington and foreign capitals, shows that the government office set up to independently grade global efforts to fight human trafficking was repeatedly overruled by senior American diplomats and pressured into inflating assessments of 14 strategically important countries in this year's Trafficking in Persons report.

In all, analysts in the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons - or J/TIP, as it's known within the U.S. government — disagreed with U.S. diplomatic bureaus on ratings for 17 countries, the sources said.

The analysts, who are specialists in assessing efforts to combat modern slavery - such as the illegal trade in humans for forced labor or prostitution - won only three of those disputes, the worst ratio in the 15-year history of the unit, according to the sources.

As a result, not only Malaysia, Cuba and China, but countries such as India, Uzbekistan and Mexico, wound up with better grades than the State Department's human-rights experts wanted to give them, the sources said.

Of the three disputes J/TIP won, the most prominent was Thailand, which has faced scrutiny over forced labor at sea and the trafficking of Rohingya Muslims through its southern jungles. Diplomats had sought to upgrade it to so-called "Tier 2 Watch List" status. It remains on "Tier 3" - the rating for countries with the worst human-trafficking records.

The number of rejected recommendations suggests a degree of intervention not previously known by diplomats in a report that can lead to sanctions and is the basis for many countries' anti-trafficking policies. This year, local embassies and other constituencies within the department were able to block some of the toughest grades.

State Department officials say the ratings are not politicized. "As is always the case, final decisions are reached only after rigorous analysis and discussion between the TIP office, relevant regional bureaus and senior State Department leaders," State Department spokesman John Kirby said in response to queries by Reuters.

Still, by the time the report was released on July 27, Malaysia and Cuba were both removed from the "Tier 3" blacklist, even though the State Department's own trafficking experts believed neither had made notable improvements, according to the sources.

The Malaysian upgrade, which was highly criticized by human rights groups, could smooth the way for an ambitious proposed U.S.-led free-trade deal with the Southeast Asian nation and 11 other countries.

Ending Communist-ruled Cuba's 12 years on the report's blacklist came as the two nations reopened embassies on each other's soil following their historic détente over the past eight months.

And for China, the experts' recommendation to downgrade it to the worst ranking, Tier 3, was overruled despite the report's conclusion that Beijing did not undertake increased anti-trafficking efforts.

That would have put China alongside the likes of Syria and North Korea, regarded by the United Nations as among the world's worst human right abusers.

Typically, J/TIP wins more than half of what officials call "disputes" with diplomatic sections of the State Department, according to people familiar with the process.

"Certainly we have never seen that kind of an outcome," said one U.S. official with direct knowledge of the department.

ABILITY TO EMBARRASS

The Trafficking in Persons report, which evaluated 188 countries and territories this year, calls itself the world's most comprehensive resource of governmental anti-human trafficking efforts. Rights groups mostly agree.

It organizes countries into tiers based on trafficking records: Tier 1 for nations that meet minimum U.S. standards; Tier 2 for those making significant efforts to meet those standards; Tier 2 "Watch List" for those that deserve special scrutiny; and Tier 3 for countries that fail to comply with the minimum U.S. standards and are not making significant efforts.

While a Tier 3 ranking can trigger sanctions limiting access to aid from the United States, the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, such action is frequently waived.

The real power is its ability to embarrass countries into action. Many countries aggressively lobby U.S. embassies to try to avoid sliding into the Tier 3 category. Four straight years on the Tier 2 Watch List triggers an automatic downgrade to Tier 3 unless a country earns a waiver or an upgrade.

The leverage has brought some success, including pressuring Switzerland to close loopholes that allowed the prostitution of minors and prompting the Dominican Republic to convict more child trafficking offenders.

President Barack Obama has called the fight against human trafficking "one of the great human rights causes of our time" and has pledged the United States "will continue to lead it."

But the office set up in 2001 by a congressional mandate to spearhead that effort is increasingly struggling to publish independent assessments of the most diplomatically important countries, the sources said.

The rejection of so many recommendations could strengthen calls by some lawmakers to investigate how the report is compiled. After Reuters on July 8 reported on the plans to upgrade Malaysia, 160 members of the U.S. House and 18 U.S. senators wrote to Secretary of State John Kerry urging him to keep Malaysia in Tier 3, based on its trafficking record. They questioned whether the upgrade was politically motivated.

Senator Robert Menendez, a Democrat, has threatened to call for a Senate hearing and an inspector general to investigate if top State Department officials removed Malaysia from the lowest tier for political reasons.

The final decision on disputed rankings this year was made in meetings attended by some of the State Department's most powerful diplomats, including Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinken, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman and Kerry's Chief of Staff, Jonathan Finer, according to the sources.

Sarah Sewall, who oversees J/TIP as Undersecretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights, presented the experts' recommendations, the sources said. The State Department declined to make any of those officials available for comment.

“NO, NO, NO”

The unprecedented degree of discord over this trafficking report began to become clear after Reuters early last month revealed plans to upgrade Malaysia from the lowest Tier 3 rank to Tier 2 Watch List.

The improved ranking came in a year in which Malaysian authorities discovered dozens of suspected mass migrant graves and human rights groups reported continued forced labor in the nation's lucrative palm oil, construction and electronics industries. As recently as April, the U.S. ambassador to Malaysia, Joseph Yun, urged the country to take prosecution of human trafficking violations more seriously.

U.S. officials have denied that political considerations influenced Malaysia's rankings.

“No, no, no,” said Sewall, when asked by reporters last Monday whether Malaysia was upgraded to facilitate trade negotiations. She said the decision was based on how Malaysia was dealing with trafficking.

Representative Chris Smith, a New Jersey Republican who authored a 2000 law that led to the creation of J/TIP, said in an interview that the office's authority is being undermined by the president's agenda. “It's so politicized,” he said.

If Malaysia had remained on Tier 3, it would have posed a potential barrier to Obama's proposed trade pact, the Trans-Pacific Partnership. That deal is a crucial part of his pivot to Asia policy. Congress approved legislation in June giving Obama expanded trade negotiating powers but prohibiting deals with Tier 3 countries such as, at that time, Malaysia.

Congressional sources and current and former State Department officials said experts in the J/TIP office had recommended keeping Malaysia on Tier 3, highlighting a drop in human-trafficking convictions in the country to three last year from nine in 2013. They said, according to the sources, that some of Malaysia's efforts to end forced labor amounted to promises rather than action.

The analysts also clashed over Cuba's record with the State Department's Western Hemisphere Affairs Bureau, whose view took precedence in the final report.

Human rights groups and people with knowledge of the negotiations over the rankings said an unearned upgrade for Cuba, especially at a time of intense attention due to the historic diplomatic thaw between Washington and Havana, could undermine the integrity of the report.

Cuba had been on the "border line" for an upgrade in recent years, a former State Department official said. And although Cuba ended up with an upgrade, the final report remained highly critical, citing concerns about Cuba's failure to deal with a degree of alleged forced labor in medical missions that Havana sends to developing countries.

China was another source of friction. J/TIP's analysts called for downgrading China, the world's second-biggest economy, to Tier 3, criticizing Beijing for failing to follow through on a promise to abolish its "re-education through labor" system and to adequately protect trafficking victims from neighboring countries such as North Korea. The final report put China on Tier 2 Watch List.

SHOWING DEFERENCE

But the candor of J/TIP can run afoul of other important diplomatic priorities, particularly in countries beset by instability or corruption where U.S. diplomats are trying to build relationships. That leads every year to sometimes contentious back-and-forth over the rankings with far-flung embassies and regional bureaus – the diplomatic centers of gravity at the State Department.

"There is supposed to be some deference to the expertise of the office," said Mark Lagon, J/TIP's ambassador-at-large from 2007 to 2009 and now president of Freedom House, an advocacy group in Washington. If the office is now losing more disputes over rankings than it is winning, that would be "an unfortunate thing," he said.

Most U.S. diplomats are reluctant to openly strike back at critics inside and outside of the administration who accuse them of letting politics trump human rights, the sources said.

But privately, some diplomats say that J/TIP staffers should avoid acting like "purists" and keep sight of broader U.S. interests, including maintaining open channels with authoritarian governments to push for reform and forging trade deals that could lift people out of poverty.

From the start, J/TIP has tried to be impartial. It is based in a building a few blocks away from State Department, adding to the sense of two separate identities and cultures.

But establishing genuine independence has been difficult. At first, the heads of regional bureaus, representing the business and political interests of U.S. embassies, would join the J/TIP team around a table and have almost an equal say in deciding country rankings in the final report.

John Miller, a former Republican congressman from Washington state named by President George W. Bush to head the bureau from 2002 to 2006, overhauled that structure.

“I said ‘no way’,” Miller said in an interview. By 2004, decisions on how to rank countries were made by his office. Diplomats who objected could appeal to then deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage. “He rarely overruled me,” said Miller. Armitage, who is no longer in a government job, did not respond to a request for comment sent through his office.

Laura Lederer, who helped set the office up as senior human trafficking adviser from 2002 to 2007, said its job was “to assess and rate countries solely on their progress in addressing the prevention of trafficking, the prosecution of traffickers, and protection and assistance of victims.”

But officials who worked in the office over the past 15 years acknowledge that countries with sensitive diplomatic or trade relationships with the United States sometimes received special treatment following pressure from local embassies and other constituencies within the department.

One such country is Mexico – a key trading partner whose cooperation is also needed against drug trafficking and illegal immigration. It was kept at Tier 2 despite the anti-trafficking unit’s call for a worse grade, according to officials in Washington and Mexico City.

The controversy over this year’s report comes at a time when J/TIP lacks a congressionally confirmed leader.

The prior chief, ambassador-at-Large Luis CdeBaca, left in November of last year. His deputy, Alison Friedman, then resigned to join a non-profit anti-slavery organization. And then it took until mid-July for Obama to nominate Georgia federal prosecutor Susan Coppedge as the next ambassador-at-large.

The lack of a director can increase the unit’s exposure to political influence, said Lederer.

Some say the perceived hit to the integrity of the 2015 report could do lasting damage.

“It only takes one year of this kind of really deleterious political effect to kill its credibility,” said Mark Taylor, a former senior coordinator for reports and political affairs at J/TIP from 2003 to 2013.



MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE DARRELL E. ISSA, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

DARRELL E. ISSA, CALIFORNIA
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LAWRENCE A. BRADY
STAFF DIRECTOR

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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December 13, 2012

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

In conjunction with the Committee's oversight into improprieties associated with the Department of Energy's 1705 Loan Guarantee Program, the issue of the use of personal e-mail accounts to conduct official business arose on numerous occasions.¹ Energy Department employees brazenly used personal e-mail accounts to communicate about internal loan guarantee decisions. In doing so, they circumvented laws and regulations governing recordkeeping requirements, concealed their discussions, and attempted to insulate their communications from scrutiny. For example, Jonathan Silver, a political appointee in charge of the \$38 billion program, used his personal account to e-mail another DOE official's personal account, issuing a stern warning: "Don't ever send an email on doe email with a personal email addresses [sic]. That makes them subpoenaable."²

The challenges associated with electronic records preservation are not limited to the use of personal e-mail. Recently, allegations arose that EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson has used at least one alias e-mail account – under the name "Richard Windsor" – to conduct official business.³ Such use of an alias raises the potential for inadequate tagging to the proper official and incomplete archiving of these communications.

¹ See, e.g., Letter from Rep. Darrell Issa, Chairman, & Rep. Jim Jordan, Chairman, Subcomm. on Reg. Affairs, Stimulus Oversight, & Gov't Spending, H. Comm. on Oversight & Gov't Reform (OGR), to Richard Kaufmann, Senior Advisor to the Sec'y, U.S. Dep't of Energy, *et al.* (Aug. 15, 2012) (requesting communications from non-official e-mail accounts regarding section 1705 loan guarantee program).

² E-mail from Jonathan Silver to Morgan Wright (Aug. 21, 2011).

³ Brendan Sasso, *House Republicans Question EPA over Secret Email Accounts*, THE HILL, Nov. 17, 2012, <http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/268605-republicans-question-epa-over-secret-email-accounts>; Michael Bastasch, *EPA Chief's Secret 'Alias' E-mail Account Revealed*, DAILY CALLER, Nov. 12, 2012, <http://dailycaller.com/2012/11/12/epa-chiefs-secret-alias-email-account-revealed/>.

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
December 13, 2012
Page 2

These examples suggest that the challenges this Administration has faced regarding the preservation of electronic communications used to conduct official business have persisted, rather than improved. Further, the growth of social media platforms – such as Facebook, Twitter, and G-chat – and mobile technologies – including laptops, handheld mobile devices, and iPads – pose new challenges for capturing and retaining records under existing federal law.

For some time, the Committee on Oversight and Government reform has been aware of deficiencies in compliance with both the Presidential Records Act and the Federal Records Act. During the 110th Congress, under the leadership of then-Chairman Henry A. Waxman, the Committee sent letters to the heads of 23 Executive Branch departments and agencies regarding e-mail communications using non-official accounts.⁴ Early in the Obama Administration, on February 18, 2009, I wrote to Gregory B. Craig, then-Counsel to the President, regarding this very subject.⁵ In April 2010, reports emerged that Office of Science and Technology Policy Deputy Chief Technology Officer Andrew McLaughlin had used his personal e-mail account to engage in official business. Specifically, he used his personal account to engage in discussion regarding policy matters under his review with his former employer, Google, Inc.⁶ In light of these and other reports documenting transparency failures, I alerted then-Committee Chairman Edolphus Towns of the need to investigate the matter further.⁷

On May 3, 2011, the full Committee held a hearing entitled, “Presidential Records in the New Millennium: Updating the Presidential Records Act and Other Federal Recordkeeping Statutes to Improve Electronic Records Preservation.” The hearing examined the enhanced transparency technology offers, particularly to improve citizens’ ability to interact with the federal government. It also highlighted the challenge of preventing federal officials from hiding their actions from public scrutiny in spite of these technological advancements. Finally, earlier this year, I wrote to White House Chief of Staff Jack Lew on August 3, 2012, requesting details of the use of personal e-mail accounts by White House staff to conduct official business.⁸

President Obama stressed improving the public’s ability to scrutinize government actions and decisions as part of his commitment to having the “most open and transparent [government] in history.”⁹ The growth of technology, however, continues to create new challenges for electronic records preservation, and this Administration has struggled to ensure that official actions are appropriately captured and documented.

⁴ See, e.g., Letter from Rep. Henry Waxman, Chairman, OGR, to Hon. Michael A. Annu, Comm’n, U.S. Soc. Sec. Admin., *et al.* (Apr. 12, 2007).

⁵ Letter from Rep. Darrell Issa, Ranking Mem., OGR, to Hon. Gregory B. Craig, Counsel to the President (Feb. 18, 2009) (requesting detailed information about White House’s Presidential Records Act compliance efforts).

⁶ Kim Hart, *Former Googler To Resign from White House*, POLITICO, Dec. 22, 2010, <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1210/46740.html>.

⁷ See, e.g., Letter from Rep. Darrell Issa, Ranking Mem., OGR, to Rep. Edolphus Towns, Chairman, OGR (June 30, 2010) (requesting investigation of use of personal e-mail accounts by Administration officials reported in media).

⁸ Letter from Rep. Darrell Issa, Chairman, OGR, to Hon. Jack Lew, Chief of Staff, The White House (Aug. 3, 2012).

⁹ The White House Blog, *Change has come to WhiteHouse.gov*, http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/change_has_come_to_whitehouse-gov (Jan. 20, 2009).

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
December 13, 2012
Page 3

To better assess the extent of this pervasive problem across the Executive Branch, I am writing to request information about your agency's policies and practices regarding the use of personal e-mail and other forms of electronic communication to conduct official business. Please provide the following information as soon as possible, but by no later than January 7, 2013:

1. Have you or any senior agency official ever used a personal e-mail account to conduct official business? If so, please identify the account used.
2. Have you or any senior agency official ever used an alias e-mail account to conduct official business? If so, please identify the account used.
3. Have you or any senior agency official ever used text messages, sent from an official or personal device, to conduct official business? If so, please identify the number or account used.
4. Please provide written documentation of the agency's policies regarding the use of non-official e-mail accounts to conduct official business, including, but not limited to, archiving and recordkeeping procedures, as well as disciplinary proceedings for employees in violation of these policies.
5. Does the agency require employees to certify on a periodic basis or at the end of their employment with the agency they have turned over any communications involving official business that they have sent or received using non-official accounts?
6. What is the agency's policy for retention of information posted on social networking platforms, including, but not limited to, Twitter or Facebook?
7. What agency policies and procedures are currently in place to ensure that all messages related to official business sent or received by federal employees and contractors on private, non-governmental e-mail accounts or social networking platforms are properly categorized as federal records?
8. Have any agency employees been subject to disciplinary proceedings for using non-official e-mail accounts to conduct official business since January 20, 2009? If so, please provide a list of names, dates of proceedings, and final outcomes.


The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and may at "any time" investigate "any matter" as set forth in House Rule X.

Please deliver your responses to the Majority Staff in Room 2157 of the Rayburn House Office Building and the Minority Staff in Room 2471 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The Committee prefers to receive all documents in electronic format.

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
December 13, 2012
Page 4

If you have any questions about this request, please call Ashley Callen or John Ohly of the Committee Staff at (202) 225-5074. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Darrell Issa
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Minority Member



MAR 21 2013
United States Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

MAR 27 2013

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your December 13 letter regarding the Department's policies and practices relating to records management and the use of personal e-mail addresses and other forms of electronic communication to conduct official government business.

The Department's records management policies are detailed in Chapter 5, Section 400 of the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) and Chapter 5, Part 4 of the Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH). These provisions set out guidelines and procedures pertaining to the creation, use, maintenance and ultimate disposition of records, including electronic records, consistent with the requirements of the Federal Records Act (44 U.S.C. § 3101) and other applicable law. Specifically, 5 FAM 422.3 reiterates that "every Department of State employee must create and preserve records that properly and adequately document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of the Department." According to 5 FAM 723(3), employees may use personal e-mail on personal time for matters not directly related to official business, and any employee using personal e-mail "should make it clear that his or her personal e-mail is not being used for official business." Chapter 5 of the FAM also outlines Department policies for the use social media by Department personnel while acting in their official capacities.

The Department offers training opportunities on its records management program at the Foreign Service Institute, and offers specialized training for individual offices and overseas posts. The Bureau of Administration's Records and

The Honorable
Darrell Issa, Chairman,
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform,
House of Representatives.

Archives Management Division supports offices and overseas posts in establishing appropriate filing systems and also conducts periodic reviews as a means of improving operations, protecting information resources and ensuring compliance with the Federal Records Act and other applicable law.

For your convenience, we have attached certain relevant provisions of the FAM and the FAH. These and other documents are publicly available on the Department's website at <http://www.state.gov/m/a/dir/regs/index.htm>. We hope you find this information useful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Thomas B. Gibbons
Acting Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

Enclosure:
As stated.

5 FAH-4 H-100 RECORDS MANAGEMENT

5 FAH-4 H-110 GENERAL

(CT:RMH-13; 06-19-2012) (Office of Origin: A/GIS/IPS) (Updated only to revise Office of Origin)

5 FAH-4 H-111 PURPOSE

(TL:RMH-1; 10-30-1995)

This handbook prescribes the basic procedures and practices for the efficient and secure management of records of the Department of State and Foreign Service posts. It is intended for the use of officers, supervisors, or other personnel who are directly or indirectly responsible for records operations or management, regardless of the physical location of the records.

5 FAH-4 H-112 SCOPE

(TL:RMH-1; 10-30-1995)

The guidelines and procedures contained in this handbook pertain to the creation, use, maintenance, and ultimate disposition of records. Unless specifically stated, these records management procedures pertain to both Department offices and posts overseas.

5 FAH-4 H-113 DEFINITIONS

(TL:RMH-1; 10-30-1995)

Administrative Records. Records relating to budget, personnel, supply, and similar housekeeping, or facilitative functions common to most offices, in contrast to program records.

Archival Records. Records with long term or permanent value worthy of preservation by the National Archives.

Automated Document System (ADS). ADS is an automated central database that contains texts of telegrams and written documents about Department policies dating back to 1973. The two basic retrieval files are:

- (1) Citation file—contains summary data on a document. Included are originator, addressee, TAGS, subject line, and ADS-generated number identifying the reel and frame location of the microfilmed text stored by OIS.
- (2) Text Record file—contains texts of telegrams. ADS stores citations to the microfilmed texts of the following types of documents:

State Dept. Records Show John Kerry Sent Hillary A 'SECRET' Email From His iPad

The Daily Caller on Jan. 30, 2016

<http://dailycaller.com/2016/01/30/state-dept-records-show-john-kerry-sent-hillary-a-secret-email-from-his-ipad/#ixzz41iFbc6gz>

Emails released by the State Department on Friday show that in 2011, then-Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry sent then-Sec. of State Hillary Clinton an email from his iPad that has been deemed to contain information classified as "Secret."

While previous releases of Clinton's emails have shown that she and her staff communicated directly with Kerry when he was a senator, the new email is the first from Kerry that the State Department has determined contains sensitive information.

Kerry has largely been silent throughout the Clinton email controversy. He has sent letters asking the State Department's inspector general to review the agency's records keeping practices, but he has not publicly criticized Clinton for exclusively using a personal email account and a home-brew email server.

Perhaps now we know why.

In the heavily-redacted email, dated May 19, 2011, Kerry, who then chaired the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, appears to be discussing negotiations between India and Pakistan. Besides Clinton, the email was sent to Tom Donilon, who then served as President Obama's National Security Advisor.

Clinton forwarded the email to an aide, instructing her to "Pls print" the document.

The redactions in the email are listed under the Freedom of Information Act exemptions 1.4(b) and 1.4(d), which are categories reserved for information gleaned from foreign government sources.

The kicker is that Kerry sent Clinton the information from his iPad, a communications device that would have been much more vulnerable to hackers than an encrypted communications system.

According to the Republican National Committee, which flagged the Kerry email in an email to reporters, the batch of Clinton records released on Friday contained 11 emails that the State Department now says contain "Secret" information. That's more than double the number of emails that contained similarly classified information released in all of the previous releases combined.

According to the RNC's calculations, 243 emails released Friday were classified at some level, bringing the overall number of classified Clinton emails to 1,583. The State Department also announced Friday that it is withholding in full and into perpetuity 22 emails that contain "Top

[NOTE: The previous document is not reprinted here in its entirety but is available at: <http://docs.house.gov/Committee/Calendar/ByEvent.aspx?EventID=104557>]

**Question for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
Representative Ed Royce
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2016**

Question 1 Part A:

ISIL must be denied the ability to operate in traditional Sunni areas. As such, a comprehensive effort to defeat ISIL in Syria will require the participation of the predominately Sunni moderate Syrian opposition forces. Yet, U.S. support for these groups is incoherent and inconsistent. To make matters worse, these moderate Sunni groups—not ISIL—are bearing the full brunt of Russian airpower and being turned against each other. If the moderate Sunnis are our partners, and their participation is necessary to defeat ISIL – why doesn't the Administration's effort in Syria reflect that fact? Please provide a detailed outline of efforts to engage Sunni partners in Syria that includes efforts in northern and southern Syria as well as cross border efforts.

Answer:

The State Department, and specifically, Special Envoy for Syria Michael Ratney, work closely with many groups in Syria, including a large contingent of moderate Sunni opposition groups. SE Ratney is in regular contact with the leadership of armed and unarmed opposition groups, the majority of which are Sunni.

The United States provides more than \$500 million in transition and non-lethal support to the Syrian opposition, including support to moderate armed opposition units. This support is designed to enable key local institutions to respond to community needs, preserve the moderate ideals of the revolution, and lay the foundation for inclusive governance. By empowering moderates to meet the needs of their communities, this support serves as a direct safeguard against extremists who would seek to buy the allegiance of the Syrian people. This support also prepares moderates to play a role in a future Syria that is inclusive and respects human rights. The Department of State is prepared to support the Syrian opposition's High Negotiation Committee's participation in the UN-facilitated Geneva negotiations later this month by funding flights and accommodations for vetted members of the negotiation team through a multi-donor mechanism created by the Government of Germany. The Department also has ongoing funding that provides negotiations training to the Syrian Opposition Council, and will be funding independent Syrian journalists to cover the negotiations from Geneva to ensure Syrians are aware of important developments in the negotiations and hold the participants accountable to the Syrian people.

We also continue to provide non-lethal support to vetted units of the armed opposition, including food, medical equipment, and winterization supplies, among other items. This assistance is designed to enhance the operational capabilities of vetted units of the armed opposition to better protect the Syrian people from regime and counter the influence of extremists, including Da'esh.

Question 1 Part B:

Also, please provide additional details as to the Administration's efforts to train, equip, and cooperate with Kurdish Protection Units or (YPG) forces. In addition to discussing U.S. engagement with these groups, please discuss Russian support for the YPG and other Kurdish

forces operating in Syria. Clearly, they have benefited from Russian airstrikes and there are reports that the level of cooperation between Russian and Kurdish forces goes beyond “deconfliction.” As Kurdish forces are fighting against, and killing, U.S.-backed moderate Syrian forces, please discuss the Administration’s plan for addressing the conflict between two groups being supported by the United States. Please submit a classified response to these questions if necessary.

Answer:

The United States maintains contact with all segments of Syrian society to encourage a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Syria. Syrian Kurds, along with other Syrian communities that have come under attack from Da’esh, play an important role in confronting and ultimately defeating Da’esh. It is in this context that the United States engages in communication with PYD and YPG representatives.

Enabling indigenous anti-Da’esh forces on the ground has been a key component in our approach to defeat Da’esh. The Syrian Democratic Forces is multi-ethnic, multi-sect umbrella group that has cleared Da’esh off the Turkey-Syria border east of the Euphrates, is isolating Raqqa, and most recently seized Shaddadi, a critical Da’esh node for training, logistics, oil, and human trafficking. The ongoing post-Shaddadi operation has seized thousands of square kilometers from Da’esh, further isolating Raqqa from Mosul and Syria from Iraq.

However, Russia also provides support to Syrian Kurdish groups, particularly the PYD and YPG. Some opposition groups in northwestern Syria have accused the YPG of guiding Russian airstrikes against them.

As we have said before, recent moves by the YPG north of Aleppo, which heightened tensions with Turkey and with Arab opposition forces, are counterproductive and undermine our collective, cooperative efforts in northern Syria to degrade and defeat Da’esh. We have not and will not recognize any PYD “self-rule” autonomous zone. We remain committed to the unity and territorial integrity of Syria. We are focused on advancing a genuine, negotiated political transition towards an inclusive government that is capable of serving the interests of all the Syrian people.

We continue to express publicly and privately to the PYD and the YPG our concerns and issues with the actions laid out above. This includes high level communication with PYD co-chair, Saleh Muslim. We continue to urge the PYD to administer inclusively, protect local populations and property, and promote and protect human rights. This is critical to hold and stabilize territory recaptured from Da’esh.

Question 2:

On October 9, 2015 the White House, Department of Defense, and Department of State announced that the Administration was going to “pause the training that we’ve been doing where we’ve recruited specific individual fighters.” Nevertheless, the FY 2017 budget request includes significant increases in non-lethal assistance to armed Syrian opposition groups. What makes this request different from the failed “train and equip” program? How are those funds being redirected? How have other U.S. priorities for assistance programs been impacted by the Islamic State crisis? How might assistance provided to neighboring states (like Lebanon and Jordan) to counter short-term security threats posed by the Islamic State affect the overall security foreign assistance balance in the region over the longer term?

Answer:

State Department non-lethal assistance to vetted armed Syrian opposition groups is distinct from Department of Defense activities and support to the armed opposition. Whereas the Department of Defense “train and equip” program was focused on training fighters and providing lethal equipment to counter Da’esh, State funding requested in FY 2017 will continue to support the provision of non-lethal equipment and goods to enable vetted units of the moderate opposition to protect themselves and their communities from attacks by the regime, their proxies, and extremist groups.

While we are supporting our partners in the region through security assistance, we also maintain significant economic assistance programs in both Jordan and Lebanon. The Administration is committed to supporting the enhancement of civil societies that are capable of holding governments, including security institutions, accountable. This balance is critical to ensuring our partners in the region remain stable in the longer term.

In Jordan, our assistance supports and expands Jordan’s contribution to bilateral and coalition efforts to counter ISIL and other regional threats. Our assistance also supports the capacity of the Jordan Armed Forces to counter threats in the region, ensure Jordan’s sovereignty, and bolster professionalization of its military.

In Lebanon, we have undertaken critical efforts to help shield the country from the spillover of the Syria crisis, which in turn helps bolster regional stability. Our steady support for the Lebanese Armed Forces, a reliable and committed partner, enhances their capacity to defend the country’s border with Syria from both Da’esh and Jabhat al-Nusra incursions, while minimizing Hizballah’s influence. U.S. assistance to Lebanon’s Internal Security Forces also helps strengthen the country’s civilian security and respond to internal terrorist threats.

Question:

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action legitimized Iran’s formerly clandestine nuclear program, which most analysts agree has long had as its goal the development of a nuclear weapons capability. This deeply troubling concession has created a precedent that will have a profoundly negative impact on U.S. nonproliferation policy around the world, especially in the Middle East. The first casualty is the effective demise of the provision in the U.S.-UAE nuclear cooperation agreement in which the UAE agreed to forgo the acquisition of an “ENR” capability as long as the U.S. did not in effect accord that status to any other country in the region. Has the U.S. government been approached by officials of the UAE in the past year to discuss a renegotiation of the UAE’s nuclear agreement with the U.S.?

Has the U.S. Government been approached by officials from any other government in the region in the past year to discuss a nuclear cooperation agreement with the U.S. that would include the possibility of its acquiring an “ENR” capability on its territory?

Answer:

At your request, the Department of State would be happy to provide a briefing on any relevant conversations between State Department and Emirati officials over the past year regarding the 2009 U.S.-UAE nuclear cooperation agreement (or 123 Agreement), as well as an update on the status of our ongoing 123 Agreement negotiations with other states in the region, including any discussion of enrichment and reprocessing (ENR).

The “Equal Terms and Conditions for Cooperation” clause in the 2009 U.S.-UAE 123 Agreement authorizes the UAE to request consultations on the terms of the agreement if the United States enters into a nuclear cooperation agreement with another non-nuclear weapon state in the Middle East that includes more favorable terms. That condition has not been met, and we do not anticipate renegotiating the terms of the U.S.-UAE 123 Agreement. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is not a nuclear cooperation agreement. The United States has a longstanding policy of limiting the spread of ENR technologies to the greatest extent possible, and we will continue to employ a full range of measures to this end. The JCPOA furthers this objective by placing rigorous constraints on Iran’s enrichment capacity and enrichment research and development activities for 10 years, by prohibiting reprocessing activities for 15 years and documenting Iran’s intent not to do so thereafter, and by providing for unprecedented verification, monitoring, and transparency measures on Iran’s nuclear program.

Question:

We understand the Administration has voiced support for women’s inclusion in peace negotiations and processes, particularly through the 2011 National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. What specific steps is the Department of State taking to ensure women’s participation in negotiations to end the conflict in Syria?

Answer:

In conflict-affected and transitioning countries throughout the world, the Department of State takes deliberate steps to support women’s leadership and participation in conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution, and reconciliation. In Syria, the Department has pursued focused activities to strengthen the active participation of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. These women have been agents of peace and the promotion of human rights, advocating for and negotiating local ceasefires and access to free movement, all of which we supported publically. These courageous women have also petitioned for the reopening of schools in ISIL-controlled villages and have negotiated prisoner releases. Since 2012, the Department’s Syria engagement has integrated women through a multi-track approach that pairs programming initiatives with U.S. diplomatic leadership. These efforts incorporate diplomatic outreach, public affairs programming, and foreign assistance initiatives with DRL and USAID. For the third year in a row, we have helped ensure that Syrian women representing civil society organizations have access to senior decision makers, such as briefing the UN Special Envoy and senior U.S. and European leaders. In such settings, women have been instrumental in providing diverse perspectives on the impact of the conflict, ongoing human rights abuses within Syria, and recommendations for confidence building measures and the framework for a political transition.

In concert with initiatives led by other partners, the Department’s efforts have brought together a vocal and talented coalition of women able to engage political counterparts and mediators effectively and with results. Toward this end, the United States and like-minded partners have routinely raised the importance of women’s inclusion in any peace process and supported UNSC resolution 2254, which explicitly encourages women’s inclusion in the Syrian peace process.

**Questions for the Record Submitted by
Representative Eliot L. Engel
Secretary of State John Kerry
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2016**

Question:

Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR): Could you provide an update on the implementation plan for the Data Hub for analytics strategy and knowledge management that was laid out in chapter two of your last QDDR? As the Department has begun to refocus its efforts on countering violent extremism and attempts to coordinate this effort across agencies, various State Department bureaus, and embassies around the world, what role could the Hub play in helping to coordinate our response?

Answer:

The Department remains committed to enhancing its data analytics capacity. We recognize the importance that data and its analysis should play in policy and decision-making as well as in operations, planning, monitoring, and evaluation. We have a small group of qualified data science officers, led by a senior Foreign Service Officer who has been assigned as the Director of Data Analytics. This group is currently performing limited data analytics functions for the Department and supporting and working with other offices that have data analytics functions specific to those Bureaus or offices.

The Department's countering violent extremism communications efforts and interagency coordination is led by the Global Engagement Center. The Office of Data Analytics has offered technical analytics support to the Center and will provide support to the Center as a top priority, whenever needed.

The Department is also working to improve its knowledge management program and launched a six-month long project to reimagine how to enhance knowledge management and continuity in support of its foreign policy professionals in Washington and overseas with modern digital tools, with particular emphasis on management of knowledge on key contacts with the ability to link people to content and place into context over time.

Question:

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE): The State Department is restructuring its efforts to counter violent extremism, including adding CVE to the name of the Bureau of Counterterrorism and renaming the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications as the Center for Global Engagement. How does this budget reflect the new missions and priorities of these entities? What metrics will you use to evaluate whether the reforms are effective?

Answer:

There is a growing recognition amongst the international community that it's not enough just to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other terrorist groups on the battlefield; we also need to address the ideology and tactics these groups employ to attract new recruits and the underlying conditions that fuel radicalization to violence. To that end, the Department and USAID are committed to pursuing a more strategic, integrated, and ultimately accountable approach to Countering Violent Extremism (CVE).

Our strategic objectives include ensuring that violent extremist groups and individuals who would threaten U.S. citizens, our allies, and our interests are unable to attract new recruits or garner support for their operations in specific communities; and ensuring that governments, multilateral organizations, and communities have the collective capacity to prevent and counter individuals and groups from becoming radicalized to violence.

In order to achieve these strategic objectives, we will employ the following tactics:

1. Expand international political will, partnerships, and expertise to better understand the drivers of violent extremism and mobilize effective interventions.
2. Encourage and assist partner governments to adopt more effective policies and approaches to prevent and counter the spread of violent extremism, including changing unhelpful practices where necessary.
3. Employ foreign assistance tools and approaches, including development, to reduce specific political or social and economic factors that contribute to community support for violent extremism in identifiable areas or put particular segments of a population at high risk of violent extremist radicalization and recruitment to violence.
4. Empower and amplify locally credible voices that can change the perception of violent extremist groups and their ideology among key demographic segments.
5. Strengthen the capabilities of government and non-governmental actors to isolate, intervene with, and promote the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals caught in the cycle of radicalization to violence.

The Secretary has directed the Bureau of Counterterrorism to play the lead role in coordinating and overseeing the Department's CVE engagement and assistance. The Bureau's expanded mandate will help the Department to widen its engagement with a broader set of actors, including non-governmental partners who can make important contributions to CVE. The Department is seeking to change the name of the Bureau to reflect this expanded role. Changing the name of the bureau reflects that CVE is an integral part of a comprehensive approach to counterterrorism. To be clear, this change is intended as an expansion of the Bureau's work. It will not take away from the Bureau's critical ongoing work on a range of important counterterrorism topics, in areas like aviation and border security, counter terrorism finance, foreign terrorist fighters, information-sharing, and sanctions.

The Department is also seeking increased foreign assistance resources to advance these critical CVE partnerships and programs around the world. The Department has requested \$186 million for CVE programs as part of the FY 2017 request, which is a 33 percent increase from our FY 2016 request. With Congress' support, this funding will enable us to significantly ramp up our CVE assistance. Focus areas include supporting the development and implementation of National CVE Action Plans; researching drivers of violent extremism and effective CVE interventions; building the CVE capacity of criminal justice actors and institutions; strengthening CVE efforts by sub-national, city, and local partners; enhancing civil society's role in countering violent extremism; countering violent extremist messaging and promoting alternative narratives; countering radicalization to violence and recruitment tactics by terrorist groups.

The Department is committed to enhancing our monitoring and evaluation of CVE programs, and we are working to improve our efforts in this area, with the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations at the forefront of this work. We will measure progress toward achieving this strategy's objectives and developing a results framework for measuring progress. CVE programs will be measured against clearly stated objectives that are linked to the strategic objectives described above and

accompanied by clear, well-developed and resourced monitoring and evaluation plans. To the extent possible, we will develop a set of common indicators to measure outputs and outcomes across CVE assistance programs, and will evaluate the longer-term effects of CVE programming. We will continue to learn from these efforts and ensure that future efforts are guided by both qualitative and quantitative monitoring information, evidence of results and effects, and where appropriate, innovation.

The new Global Engagement Center (GEC) is charged with leading the coordination, integration, and synchronization of government-wide communications activities in order to counter the messaging and diminish the influence of international terrorist organizations with foreign audiences abroad. This critical mission requires significant additional resources, so the Department has requested \$21.5 million for FY2017 while increasing the Center's FY2016 budget to \$15.9 million from the \$5.6 million provided to the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications in FY2015.

A primary goal of the GEC is to better understand target audiences through advanced data analytics. During FY2016, it will devote nearly \$1.5 million to baseline research that will inform our content development. We must have a comprehensive understanding of the audiences we seek to influence in order to be successful. In addition, the Center will devote another \$1.6 million to enhance our capabilities to analyze dynamically data derived from social media. This data analysis will help us better understand the foreign audiences abroad that are most susceptible to influence from violent extremist groups and allow us to more specifically tailor our messaging and narrative development and to align our resources accordingly.

The Center will devote approximately \$1.5 million of FY2016 funding to support counter-ISIL campaigns, including some managed by foreign partners. The Center also will engage top talent from content development sources within the United States and abroad in order to make its operations swifter and more agile and adaptive. For example, the Center will fund original content created both internally and by third parties for use by members of the Counter-ISIL Coalition; this content will be hosted on the Global Coalition Website.

Recognizing the strategic value of partners in delivering key messages, the Center will provide targeted resources enhancement to selected partner organizations across the globe to enable them to create and disseminate counter-ISIL content that draws upon relevant history and culture and is locally resonant. For example, the Center will provide modest additional funding for Arewa24, a major project sponsored by the Bureaus of Counterterrorism and African Affairs that embeds messaging against violent extremist narratives in general entertainment programming. Modest additional funding from the Center will deliver Arewa24's award-winning content to audiences of concern in several more countries.

Finally, the new Center will strengthen and deepen CSCC's critical interagency coordination function, as well as the direct digital engagement in Arabic, Urdu and Somali that CSCC pioneered starting in 2010 and will devote approximately \$600,000 to enhancing the efficiency of this line of effort.

Question:

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Programming: What are the key goals of our CVE programming? How does our programming aim to achieve this goal?

Answer:

The Department's work on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) seeks to reduce the ability of violent extremists to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize followers to violence and to address specific factors that feed violent extremist recruitment and radicalization. This includes working with USAID to

build specific alternatives, capabilities, and resiliencies in targeted communities and populations to reduce the risk of radicalization and recruitment.

To achieve these goals, the Department and USAID will utilize and integrate the U.S. government's various diplomatic, strategic communications, rule of law, and development resources and tools.

Specifically, State and USAID will pursue the following:

1. State and USAID will focus and expand diplomatic efforts with governmental, multilateral, and non-governmental actors to promote CVE cooperation and advance this strategy.
2. Under the leadership of the interagency Global Engagement Center (GEC), State will work through its public affairs networks, functional bureaus (such as CT) and engagement abroad to promote CVE communications and U.S. strategic counterterrorism narratives.
3. State and USAID, in coordination with our international partners, will expand and target rule of law and development programs to address specific drivers of violent extremism and enhance CVE partnerships. Resources will be focused on areas where they will have the greatest sustained impact, and programming will be guided by rigorous analysis of violent extremism drivers, but also seek to innovate and learn in order to ensure our toolkit is strong.
4. State and USAID will increase support for efforts to understand overall trends of violent extremism and to identify and analyze the local geography, demography, and drivers of recruitment and radicalization to violent extremism: where the hotspots are; where and with whom terrorists are focusing their efforts; who is most susceptible; and why they may be motivated to join. State and USAID developed assessment frameworks and programming guides related to conflict management and mitigation and political transition that are designed to identify and analyze issues related to violent extremism and radicalization to violence.

Question:

How does the Bureau of Diplomatic Security determine which countries are critical human intelligence threats?

Answer:

The answer to this question is classified and will be passed under separate cover.

Question:

Has the Diplomatic Security bureau updated its pass through procedures and policies since the release of the September 2011 Office of the Inspector General report Number ISP-I-11-68? What updates were made?

Answer:

In an effort to update pass through procedures and policies, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security revised the Department of State's Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) section 12 FAM 263, "Counterintelligence Awareness Program," in 2012. These revisions modify and clarify language on counterintelligence programs for critical HUMINT counterintelligence posts, including the "13 points" used to analyze assignments to these posts.

Question:

What are the basic threat considerations underlying Diplomatic Security pass through recommendations?

Answer:

The basic threat considerations consist of 13 evaluative factors, outlined in the Counterintelligence section of the Department of State's Foreign Affairs Manual (12 FAM 263.3-2), which are used to conduct a review of an employee after the employee has been proposed for an assignment in a location rated as a Critical Human Intelligence threat (HUMINT). The decision to designate a post as a critical HUMINT-threat location is made by the Overseas Security Policy Board, which is chaired by Diplomatic Security (DS) and has robust Intelligence Community membership. Once a post is deemed critical HUMINT-threat, assignments to that post are reviewed against 13 factors to identify and minimize risks to the employee, his or her family members, and/or members of household to ensure the protection of national security information. The Department takes seriously its responsibility to protect its employees and their families from compromise by hostile foreign intelligence services (FIS).

The 13 evaluative factors used in the pass through process are:

- (1) Whether the employee or an immediate family member has an immediate family member still residing in the proposed critical HUMINT threat country;
- (2) Whether the employee or an immediate family member has other family ties in any critical HUMINT threat post where a foreign intelligence service (FIS) could exploit familial bonds of affection;
- (3) Whether the employee has family member(s) currently or recently employed by the critical HUMINT threat country's military armed forces, intelligence or security service, police service, or ministry of foreign affairs;
- (4) Whether the employee has a history of poor security practices (violations of 12 FAM 262 and 12 FAM 550) that are recent and of a serious nature;
- (5) Whether the employee is or has been a known target of interest to a FIS;
- (6) Whether the employee has a history of aberrant behavior such as drug or alcohol abuse or criminal misconduct;
- (7) Whether the employee has demonstrated emotional instability (as determined by the Office of Medical Services);
- (8) Whether the employee has exhibited financial or fiscal management irresponsibility that interferes with his or her performance of duty;
- (9) Whether a past investigation concerning the employee documents a serious allegation concerning misconduct, suitability, or professional ethics that could be exploited by a FIS;
- (10) Whether the employee has had more than one previous assignment to the same critical HUMINT threat post;
- (11) Whether the employee has made an unauthorized disclosure of sensitive or classified information;
- (12) Whether the employee or close family member has demonstrated loyalty to the proposed critical HUMINT threat country of assignment (i.e., previously employed with the FIS or ministry of foreign affairs); and
- (13) Whether the employee has had romantic involvement with citizen(s) of the proposed critical HUMINT threat country of assignment.

Question:

What independent appeals mechanism currently exists when an officer's assignment is blocked during the pass through evaluation? What is the appeals process?

Answer:

The Department has outlined and formalized a pass through appeals process for employees and bureaus through 3 FAH-1 H-2425.3-2 (Assignment Panel Appeals) noting the following:

- You [the employee] have 10 days to appeal a panel decision, in writing, to the DG [Director General of Human Resources]. If you are appealing a decision of the panel to assign you to a position, you must identify specific reasons that show service in such a position would impose undue hardship on you personally or professionally. You may also appeal a decision of a panel not to assign you to a position for which the panel considered you.
- Bureaus of the Department may also appeal a panel decision, within the same time frame, to the DG. Bureau appeals must delineate why the assignment of the employee would run counter to the efficient operation of the office or post.
- The decision of the DG will be final and binding upon you as well as on a bureau. There is no appeal beyond the DG in either case. Your failure to accept the decision by the DG will make you subject to disciplinary action outlined in 3 FAM 4300.
- You may not appeal a directed assignment.

Question:

Trafficking: What is the status of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs' policy on Indians traveling to the United States who have had, or currently hold a T or T derivative visa?

Answer:

In August 2014, anti-trafficking advocates and U.S. government officials first reported to the Department of State that Indian officials had begun to implement a policy prohibiting the travel of T and T-derivative visa holders between the United States and India. We understand the Indian government has revised the policy that previously authorized the confiscation of Indian citizens' passports bearing U.S.-issued T visas and now allows T visa holders to travel if they receive additional certification from the Indian government. To acquire such certification, T visa holders must provide Indian officials with sensitive information, such as U.S. court documents, proving that they are the victims of trafficking crimes committed in the United States. Some T visa holders have characterized these requirements as burdensome and invasive.

The Department engages regularly with the Indian government on combating trafficking in persons and protecting trafficking victims, including on T visa issues, including during Under Secretary Sarah Sewall's visit to India in January 2016.

Question:

OCO Funding: The two-year budget deal reached late last year increased the International Affairs Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) budget by approximately 60% compared to FY 2015. This increase was critical and allowed the U.S. to maintain its engagement overseas. However, the growth in OCO has also made the International Affairs Budget dangerously dependent on a funding mechanism that was originally intended only to cover temporary, generally war-related programs. In fact, since FY 2010 "base" International Affairs funding has been cut 30%. What are the short and long-term

implications of this growing dependence on OCO and how does the Administration propose to strengthen “base” or long-term International Affairs funding in the future?

Answer:

The OCO portion of the FY 2017 Request for the Department and USAID is \$14.9 billion, consistent with the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015. The OCO request will support Department of State and USAID efforts to prevent, address, and recover from man-made crises and natural disasters and secure State and USAID global operations. The United States is currently engaged in more places, all at the same time, with more issues of consequence than in recent history.

In support of this increased engagement and assistance the FY 2017 Request includes OCO increases for several major programs. For Embassy Security, Construction, and Maintenance, we will be relying more heavily on OCO to construct safer and more secure diplomatic facilities in India, Kenya, Uganda, and Afghanistan. It will also enable us to contribute to peacekeeping missions; shield allies and partners from potential threats; aid Afghanistan and Pakistan; and step up our efforts to destroy ISIL and confront and recover from other crises in the Middle East and Africa.

While we appreciate that the OCO increase was instrumental to securing an overall increase in funding for FY 2016 and FY 2017 above levels included in the Budget Control Act, the Department is concerned about the shift in balance between base and OCO funding. Programs supported with base funding serve as the foundation of core, ongoing Department operations and assistance programs. Base funds support vital development and diplomacy programs, including health, democracy, and diplomatic security.

The Department looks forward to working with Congress to restore the Department’s enduring funding levels for long-term programs as we move toward the FY 2018 budget. The President’s Budget anticipates this by planning for the restoration of \$8.7 billion to the International Affairs base budget in FY 2018.

Question :

Tuberculosis: The World Health Organization recently announced that tuberculosis had surpassed HIV to become the world’s number one infectious killer. TB caused 1.5 million deaths in 2014. That same year, roughly 480,000 people developed multi-drug resistant TB – double the number of cases diagnosed in 2000. Although we know how to diagnose and cure TB, less than half of these patients survive. In December, the Administration unveiled a comprehensive plan to address multi-drug resistant TB worldwide, a promising step towards combating this threat head on. Less than two months later, though, the FY17 budget proposed \$191 million for TB - the same amount proposed for FY16 and \$45 million less than the amount ultimately appropriated by Congress. Can you speak to why the Administration did not feel compelled to request more funding for TB, in light of these ambitious goals and startling statistics?

Answer:

The FY 2017 request for tuberculosis (TB) of \$191 million is a reduction of \$45 million from the FY 2016 appropriated level. However, the Fiscal Year 2017 request does not represent the totality of the U.S. government’s response to this disease. USAID and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) collaborate with other U.S. government agencies and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund) to integrate and expand TB health services and strengthen delivery platforms, and with the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) on TB/HIV co-infection

interventions. It is important to note that the Global Fund is a major donor for international TB control, and the U.S. Government remains the largest donor to the Global Fund.

The U.S. government is the world's leading donor to TB worldwide and USAID is the leading global TB technical assistance provider, even at the current request level. Middle-income countries have higher burdens of TB and multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) and a greater ability to pay for their programs, and are increasingly bearing a larger share of the costs. USAID is working with these countries on domestic resource mobilization, which seeks to increase their share of resources.

While the rate of TB cases has been declining for the past decade and the world almost met the Millennium Development Goals of a 50 percent reduction TB incidence and mortality by 2015, compared to 1990, 1.5 million people die each year from TB globally, with 9.6 million new cases annually, including 480,000 cases of MDR-TB. As you correctly noted, TB is now the leading infectious disease killer of adults. Since 2000, TB treatment has saved the lives of more than 43 million people. Over the last five years, USAID has contributed to curing over 10 million TB patients and initiating treatment for more than 220,000 MDR-TB patients.

In December 2015, the Obama Administration released the *National Action Plan for Combatting Multidrug-Resistant Tuberculosis*, which identifies critical actions to be taken by key U.S. government departments and agencies – including USAID and CDC – to combat the global rise of MDR-TB. Further, the MDR-TB Plan is a “call to action” to address the threat of drug-resistant TB strains by mobilizing both political will and additional funding commitments from bilateral and multilateral donors, private-sector partners, and governments of all affected countries.

USAID will lead the international component of the White House MDR-TB National Action Plan by introducing new point of care diagnostics, new MDR-TB drugs and regimens, and new approaches to improve adherence. USAID is already leveraging additional resources and creating efficiencies through innovative partnerships with two American companies and a global partnership to achieve more with existing resources, which include:

- Janssen Pharmaceuticals will provide \$50 million for the Action Plan, through the donation of new drugs, strengthening of surveillance systems, and improving adherence to MDR-TB treatment;
- Through a partnership with Cepheid (the producer of the Xpert TB and MDR-TB diagnostic), USAID, PEPFAR, UNITAID and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Cepheid agreed to reduce the price of the Xpert diagnostic cartridge from almost \$17 to less than \$10. The Cepheid diagnostic test price reduction has increased our ability to accurately and quickly diagnose TB and MDR-TB, and saved over \$50 million in two years, including for countries like South Africa purchasing the tests with domestic resources; and
- USAID has partnered with the Stop TB Partnership's Global Drug Facility to achieve a 50 percent price reduction for MDR-TB drugs, thereby stretching resources for the U.S. Government, Global Fund, and country partners.

In addition to USAID's global TB work, the CDC's Division of Global HIV and TB is directly partnering with Ministries of Health to prevent, find and cure TB and drug-resistant TB around the world. They provide technical support to strengthen surveillance systems, improve laboratory capacity, and aid in infection control procedures which are all critical in the fight against MDR-TB. CDC was a founding member of WHO's “Green Light Committee” initiative to scale-up MDR-TB treatment availability, and works closely with domestic and international partners through the TB Trials Consortium on research to improve upon currently very limited MDR treatment options. Finally, CDC

and partners are working in countries to track, report and combat MDR-TB and other antimicrobial resistant pathogens in alignment with the USG's Global Health Security Agenda.

Question:

During the last several weeks, we have all been alarmed and heartbroken by stories of those impacted by the Zika virus. The President has asked for more than \$1.8 billion in emergency funding to address the Zika outbreaks, including \$335 million for USAID and \$41 million for the State Department. I certainly recognize the importance of emergency funding to help those impacted by Zika – however, I think we would be remiss if we failed to also recognize the wider issues this crisis underscores. Scientists hypothesize that higher-than-average temperatures in the southern hemisphere have made it easier for mosquitos – such as the *Aedes aegypti* [*AY-diss Egypt-EYE*] mosquito, which transmits the Zika virus – to breed, and have allowed the viruses they transmit to flourish. Nick Watts, the head of a commission on climate change and health for the medical journal *The Lancet* has said, “Unless mitigated, climate change is likely to bring the spread of new emergent infectious diseases like Zika virus.”

How does the President's budget address both the need to aid those affected by Zika and the need to combat issues like climate change that threaten our global health security in the long run?

Answer:

While the President's budget for the Department of State and USAID in FY 2017 does not include a foreign assistance request specifically for a response to Zika, it does include funding (\$72.5 million) in the Global Health Programs account for Global Health Security, the line item from which emerging threats such as Zika are traditionally addressed. These resources will build on our ongoing preparedness efforts through the Global Health Security Agenda, which aims to achieve a world that is secure from infectious disease threats by building capacity to prevent, detect, and rapidly respond. We are working in synergy across agencies (including with the Departments of Health and Human Services and its Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Agriculture, and Defense) and with the international community to achieve common goals.

The CDC recently concluded that Zika virus is a cause of microcephaly and other severe fetal brain defects, and every day we learn more about the virus. There is still much that we do not yet know about Zika and its relationship to neurological disorders and other poor health outcomes that are being reported in Zika-affected areas. We will work aggressively to investigate these outbreaks, and mitigate, to the best extent possible, the spread of the virus.

Climate change programs produce important benefits that reinforce ongoing work in various sectors, including health. For example, climate events such as extreme hydrological variability and drought, when combined with environments of poverty, can encourage water storage inside the home and provide breeding grounds for Zika's mosquito vector. Adaptation programs and ensuring 24/7 access to clean water and sanitation in the Caribbean and Latin America will not only help poor and especially vulnerable countries and communities to build resilience to the impacts of climate change, but they will also protect hard-won development gains. By enabling these countries to build resilience and adapt to extreme events, these efforts counter threats that otherwise could require more costly, reactive interventions. A key aspect of these programs involves building capacity to use climate information to better inform decisions on the ground in key sectors, including health. Work to make better use of “climate services” for health is already underway across the United States, in the U.N. system, and on the ground in many countries. In addition, mitigation programs help to steer the world toward a low carbon future, which will help moderate the effects of various climate change-induced phenomena, such

as new health challenges. The FY 2017 request for Department of State and USAID climate change programs, including the Green Climate Fund, is \$983.9 million.

Question:

Throughout many of the areas hardest hit by Zika, contraception can be difficult to access and pregnancy is often not a choice. Almost 19 million women in Zika affected areas have an unmet need for family planning services, and 900,000 infections are expected among women of reproductive age. As we continue to respond to the Zika epidemic, it's critical that women have the tools they need to make the best decisions for their families. We have an opportunity right now to expand access to family planning and maternal health care for women in the region. What is being done, and how can Congress help support efforts to ensure that all women have the tools they need to voluntarily delay pregnancy? To what extent are family planning and reproductive health services being integrated into maternal health programs as part of the Zika response? Within the emergency supplemental funding request for Zika, are there dedicated resources for contraception and reproductive health care, in addition to the critical funds for maternal health, research, and mosquito control?

Answer:

USAID is committed to ensuring that women and couples in developing countries have access to voluntary family planning information, services, and methods and are free to make informed decisions about their reproductive lives. Family planning is included in a comprehensive maternal and child health response to Zika virus, and included within the Administration's emergency request for responding to Zika virus. Women considering becoming pregnant in Zika-affected areas should be advised of the risks, and provided with family planning information, services, and methods, if they decide to delay pregnancy.

USAID is working with its missions throughout Latin America and the Caribbean to understand their needs in response to Zika, including family planning. USAID currently supports family planning activities in Haiti and Guatemala. USAID is preparing to respond to country requests, building on our existing capacities and expertise working with partner governments, multilateral organizations, the private sector, and NGOs.

USAID takes very seriously the legal and policy requirements that guide its health programs, including family planning, and works with Missions and partners to ensure compliance with these requirements. Most countries in the Latin America region have graduated from USAID family planning assistance. USAID has to ensure capacity to effectively monitor for compliance with the legal and policy requirements before pursuing family planning service delivery or provision of contraceptive commodities in Zika-affected countries without existing USAID family planning programs.

USAID has a strong working relationship with UNFPA. With USAID having graduated most countries in the Latin America region from family planning assistance, we will work closely with UNFPA to ensure women and couples in the region have family planning information, services, and methods, should they decide to delay pregnancy.

Question:

USAID Assistant Administrator for Global Health, Dr. Ariel Pablos-Mendez, commented in a hearing on the Zika epidemic earlier this month that USAID would look "to build on each country's existing maternal and child health, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS platforms to respond to this virus." Given the limited bilateral global health investments in the region, how are you working to ensure that U.S. support is responsive to what women and service providers say is needed? What programs and

organizations are best situated to deliver those services and what kind of support do they need? How are you coordinating with and supporting partners in impacted countries who are working to expand access to family planning and maternal health services?

Answer:

USAID currently has maternal and child health and family planning programs in Guatemala and Haiti. Most health programs in the region graduated over the past five to ten years. Although, USAID has graduated from assistance in several countries in the region, in many cases our relationships with the ministries of health have continued through ongoing regional program support and HIV/AIDS programs. Additionally, several U.S. private voluntary organizations (PVOs) maintain an ongoing health program presence in the region.

As we plan for increased implementation of programs in response to Zika, we are looking at using these existing relationships to understand and assess what is needed. We will seek to build on the gains that were made prior to graduation of these countries from USAID health sector assistance, in terms of strengthening health systems and improving service delivery. In addition, we will rely on multilateral partners active in the region, and with which we have ongoing relationships, notably the Pan American Health Organization and UNICEF, and we will look for opportunities to restart partnerships with U.S. PVOs that have ongoing efforts within the region. Some efforts will first require an assessment of needs and a determination of where our support can be most beneficial within the existing country systems.

Question:

Uganda's recent electoral process did not meet international standards of free and fair elections – especially as massive security force deployments during and after the elections effectively shut down the capital and ensured the continued detention of the president's main rival. Uganda is now the largest recipient of U.S. security assistance in sub-Saharan Africa. How does the State Department ensure that investments in the security forces of critical counterterrorism partners like Uganda are not used to stifle dissent and prevent democratic processes? And are you concerned that such support could foment a more violent backlash from the population and ultimately trigger broader regional instability?

Answer:

The United States and Uganda have a long-standing and strong partnership that has contributed to the stability and prosperity of the region. In a March 11 statement, the State Department reiterated our ongoing concerns regarding Uganda's post-election environment, in which the government and its security forces have persistently violated the rights and freedoms of Ugandan citizens and the media. We are concerned that the Ugandan government's recent actions could endanger the economic and political progress that has enabled our relationship to grow. We have urged the government to take prompt action to reverse this troubling trend.

We are committed to supporting Uganda's constructive role contributing to regional peace and security, while at the same time urging Uganda to improve its internal governance and human rights record. We consistently emphasize that countering violent extremism over the long term involves building trust with populations and good governance matters; poor governance is not only bad for democracy and development, but also feed the grievances that terrorists exploit for radicalization. As we have stated on numerous occasions, the freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly are fundamental human rights and a critical component of democracy.

Our representatives in Kampala have made it very clear to the Ugandan government that our bilateral assistance is contingent on demonstrated improvement on protection of civilians and the professionalization of armed forces.

U.S. government security assistance programs for Uganda are designed to increase professionalism and respect for human rights. In this way, we see our security assistance programming as lessening, rather than promoting, the likelihood of violence between security forces and civilians. All recipients of this support are vetted for any history of gross violations of human rights, in accordance with the Leahy Amendment, which prevents U.S. assistance from going to those who have committed human rights violations.

Question:

In recent years, we have witnessed a narrowing of political space in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and Republic of the Congo, along with efforts by many of these leaders to extend their tenures in power. The Administration has had strong rhetoric on the need for strong institutions, and on the importance of term limits. How does the President's budget match that rhetoric with support to democratic institutions to reverse this worrying trend?

Answer:

As you have noted, the Administration has made very clear the need for strong democratic institutions, from President Obama's speech in Addis Ababa in July 2015 to numerous speeches by Secretary Kerry and Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield among other top administration officials. Strengthening of democratic institutions is the first pillar of President Obama's Presidential Policy Directive on Sub-Saharan Africa.

The FY 2017 request for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG), \$2.7 billion, responds to the following policy and development priorities: (1) address democratic backsliding and closing of political spaces by promoting government accountability, citizen participation, and fundamental human rights; (2) respond to and support democratic political transitions; and (3) sustain our investments in countries that are making progress.

The FY 2017 request for DRG funding in Africa is more than \$343 million, a nearly 100 percent increase over the FY 2015 level.

The FY 2017 budget requests substantial funding increases over the FY 2015 actuals for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (\$13.7 million), Uganda (\$1.0 million), and Burundi (\$2.0 million). In DRC, assistance seeks to improve the capacity and governance of core national-level institutions. In Burundi, DRG assistance will focus on strengthening the capacity of civil society and media to promote government accountability and post-conflict reconciliation. DRG assistance in Uganda is aimed at enabling democratic institutions to function effectively and foster more sustainable and equitable national development. In FY 2015, the U.S. government reestablished its bilateral DRG programming in Rwanda (\$2.0 million), the FY 2017 request continues this, resources will support reforms that promote government accountability, respect for human rights, and greater democratization of decision making by building the capacity of civil society. The Republic of Congo is eligible to receive regional and centrally managed resources for Governing Justly and Democratically (GJD) programming and has benefitted from these types of programs in the past.

We also would like to highlight significant democratic gains in Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Nigeria and Senegal, to name a few.

Question:

Instability in Libya in recent years has led to an increase in terrorist activity in the Sahelian countries to the south. As the ISIS threat in Libya grows, how does the President's budget seek to increase stability in countries such as Niger, Chad, and Mali beyond building partner military capacity?

Answer:

- Countries in the Sahel have made military progress against terrorist groups and have taken greater ownership over their individual country and regional security. By themselves, however, traditional security-based responses to the spread of violent extremism may be inadequate or even counter-productive under certain conditions. The United States, therefore, complements support for military or intelligence-based engagements with support for the broader priorities of promoting good governance, building civilian security sector capacity, and creating economic opportunity in the region. Our programs and policies recognize that violent extremists seek out individuals and groups embittered by the lack of governmental accountability, the denial of basic human rights, and the lack of opportunities for political, economic and social participation. During discussion with countries in the region, we have emphasized the urgency of following up military gains in conflict areas with civil administration and services, civilian security, and programs to stimulate economic growth and job creation.
- Chad, Mali, and Niger are members of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP). TSCTP was established in 2005 to serve as the U.S. government's primary multi-year whole-of-government vehicle to build sustainable individual country and regional counter terrorism and countering violent extremism capacity in the Sahel and Maghreb.
- Under TSCTP, the United States applies a holistic multi-year approach to address socioeconomic, political, and cultural drivers of violent extremism. Activities include promoting educational and vocational opportunities for economically vulnerable populations, particularly young men and women. TSCTP also focuses on building accountability at all levels of government and improving responsiveness to community needs. In addition, TSCTP supports the partner countries as efforts to amplify the voices of credible messengers and community leaders promoting non-violence and providing positive alternatives to the narrative of violent extremism.
- TSCTP programs improve the effectiveness, responsiveness, and accountability of law enforcement, justice, and prison systems. These efforts help build trust between citizens and government, thereby making citizens less vulnerable to the appeal of extremist groups. For instance in Niger and Mali, TSCTP promotes prison reform including reintegration programs and prison security and in Mali and Senegal programs improve police responsiveness to community security concerns.
- The Security Governance Initiative (SGI) is working with Niger and Mali on comprehensive approaches to improving security sector governance and capacity, including improving strategic planning and human resource management of these institutions.
- State Department Counterterrorism Partnership Funds are also vital resources for increasing community-based civilian security sector capacity and addressing CVE needs.

Question:

Al-Shabaab Threat in Africa: The United States has invested substantial time and energy to stemming the expansion of al-Shabaab and supporting the establishment of a permanent government in Somalia. With critical timelines to approve a constitution and organize elections later this year, how does the

President's budget ensure that there is minimal backsliding on the governance or security fronts in Somalia?

Answer:

The FY 2017 budget request provides continued funding to foster security and to help Somalia build the political, economic, and security institutions it needs to stabilize the country and develop foundations for development and growth. Somalia's continued progress requires long-term initiatives that will address underlying human development, governance, security, and economic challenges facing a country emerging from more than two decades of conflict. But ultimately, Somalia's progress will depend on its leaders.

On the governance front, U.S. development resources will prioritize community stabilization and recovery to help build resilience in areas recovered from al-Shabaab; help consolidate representative governing institutions and critical state-building processes; help establish responsive and legitimate local governance; and help expand the delivery of critical basic services.

On the security front, resources will continue to support the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) as the most capable stabilizing force presently in Somalia, while also boosting our support for the development of Somali security forces necessary for the country's long term stability. This includes assistance to build the capacity of the Ministry of Defense (MOD) to provide civilian oversight and direction over the Somali National Army (SNA); the creation of professional, mobile, multi-clan military units; support for the integration regional military forces under the command and control of the SNA; and support to help rebuild and professionalize the Somali Police Forces.

Question:

South Sudan: South Sudan's peace agreement is a vital step in the right direction and we commend efforts to ensure that the yet-to-be-formed Transitional Government of National Unity delivers on the promise of this peace deal. However, South Sudan continues to face grave security and governance challenges, as evidenced by the recent attack on IDPs in a UN compound and the expansion of conflict into the Equatoria region. How does this budget prioritize the people of South Sudan, who so desperately need and deserve an end to the conflict, as promised in a peace deal that has yet to be enacted? And how does the State Department propose to reengage on security assistance given the reports of ongoing gross human rights violations – including allegations recently made by the UN Panel of Experts about the role the head of the Army has played in directing scorched earth tactics?

Answer:

That the United States is the single largest donor of humanitarian assistance to South Sudan, having provided nearly \$1.5 billion in emergency assistance since the start of the conflict in December 2013, demonstrates the extent to which the U.S. government prioritizes the people of South Sudan. The FY 2017 request for South Sudan of \$225.2 million reflects this Administration's continuing commitment to securing peace in South Sudan, and specifically to supporting the aspirations of South Sudanese for a stable country and a hopeful future.

More specifically, the \$30 million Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) piece of the funding request reflects the need for robust ceasefire monitoring. Ongoing violence continues to impede implementation of the peace agreement; even after the formation of a transitional government, ceasefire monitoring will be critical. Violence has displaced communities and killed innocent civilians, and we are committed to ensuring an end to such violence, to give South Sudan's political leaders the necessary space to form a transitional government.

The FY 2017 funding request will also allow the continuation of programs in health, education, civil society, conflict mitigation, and rule of law, which are vital to the well-being of South Sudanese people, and which will lay the groundwork for a stable post-conflict society. The conflict that began in December 2013 was driven by the political ambitions of a handful of elite actors, and forced us to shift the focus of our assistance away from the government to support the people of South Sudan. Building up South Sudanese civil society, as well as the ability of average South Sudanese to pursue their livelihoods, is crucial to strengthening the social fabric of South Sudan generally, which will be vital in ensuring a lasting peace.

The United States will maintain its robust commitment to help the most vulnerable people in South Sudan through emergency humanitarian assistance, but what all South Sudanese need more than anything is a lasting peace. That fact drives our engagement on South Sudan, and informs the FY 2017 funding request.

To date, PKO-funded assistance has focused narrowly on support for ceasefire monitoring and the implementation of the agreement's security arrangements. As indicated by the absence of an FY 2017 request for the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, there will be no reengagement of direct security assistance to the South Sudanese military absent a transitional government, as provided by the peace agreement. Once an inclusive transitional government is formed and begins its work, the question of reengagement on security assistance will require a balancing act between ensuring that those most responsible for atrocities be held accountable – by the Hybrid Court for South Sudan or another credible, impartial mechanism – and pursuing a smart, comprehensive program to support the implementation of the agreement, improve human rights performance and accountability of security forces, and to begin a process for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), which is essential to preventing the outbreak of future conflict. In accordance with the Leahy law, no assistance will be provided to security forces responsible for human rights violations.

The United States is also the largest financial contributor to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and our belief in the importance of this mission for the well-being of the South Sudanese people is reflected in the separate FY 2017 request of \$372 million to fund UNMISS.

Question:

There have long been criticisms that the Nigerian government's approach to Boko Haram is too military-centric and has not addressed the governance-based grievances of the populations in the northeast. How does the President's budget assist the Nigerians in developing non-military (i.e., development, counter violent extremism) approaches to countering the Boko Haram insurgency?

Answer:

- In addition to our security partnerships, we work closely with the Government of Nigeria and the governments of the other Lake Chad Basin countries (Cameroon, Chad, and Niger) to address the governance-based grievances in the Boko Haram-affected regions, especially northeast Nigeria. The FY 2017 bilateral foreign assistance budget request for Nigeria totals \$606.1 million. This includes \$5.1 million to support Peace and Security in Nigeria, and \$27.0 million to support Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG). Of these amounts, a portion is being channeled specifically to Counter Boko Haram activities in the Northeast.
- The USAID Mission is considering expanding programming in the northeast within these sectors; however, any increase in programming will be partly dependent upon improvements in security. USAID channels a portion of DRG and Peace and Security funding towards two key programs which support the northeast: 1) Training of Leaders on Religious and National Co-

existence (TOLERANCE), implemented by Interfaith Meditation Centre. This program includes Borno as one of six northern states in which it works and, 2) Strengthening Advocacy and Civic Engagement (SACE), supports education for IDPs in the Northeast through one of its 16 civil society cluster organizations.

- Nigeria and other Lake Chad Basin countries also benefit from centrally and regionally managed foreign assistance activities. Current U.S. government activities that illustrate our support to the non-military approach to counter Boko Haram include: supporting the Nigerians and other Lake Chad Basin countries to develop effective policies for dealing with Boko Haram defectors and detainees, including ongoing targeted diplomatic engagements; support police reform and police deployment to the Boko Haram-impacted regions, a critical precursor to restoring stability, improving citizen trust in government, and enabling economic development; enhance counter violent extremism messaging, including ongoing TV programming through AREWA 24 and; through USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives programs in Nigeria and Niger, improve the governments' responsiveness to citizen expectations and increase civic engagement with governing authorities, reduce perceptions of marginalization, and reduce youth vulnerability and interest in extremism. Specifically in Nigeria, we are advising the Government on the development and implementation of a reconstruction and long term development plan for the northeast. Through the Security Governance Initiative (SGI), which Nigeria is one of six African partners, we are exploring ways to enhance the management of security and justice systems to more efficiently and effectively provide security and justice services, including in the Northeast.

Question:

Humanitarian Efforts in Response to Boko Haram: Considering cuts to humanitarian assistance funding in the FY17 budget, how does the State Department plan to ensure that humanitarian needs are met for those displaced by Boko Haram violence in the Lake Chad Basin, for refugees from the crisis in Burundi in Tanzania, the DRC, and Rwanda, and for internally displaced persons and refugees in the Central African Republic?

Answer:

The Administration remains dedicated to providing strong support for humanitarian programs in Africa and worldwide, even as needs continue to grow. The President's FY 2017 request reflects the Administration's ongoing commitment to these programs. The FY 2017 request includes \$6.156 billion for humanitarian assistance, including \$1.957 billion for the International Disaster Assistance Account, \$1.35 billion for Food for Peace Title II, \$2.799 billion for the Migration and Refugee Assistance Account, and \$50 million for the Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund. The overall FY 2017 request for humanitarian assistance is \$511 million higher than the FY 2016 request. In concert with FY 2016 resources, the request will enable the U.S. government to respond to the dire humanitarian situation resulting from conflicts around the world, including in Africa, as well as the humanitarian needs resulting from El Nino.

Thanks to generous support from the U.S. Congress, the U.S. government is the largest humanitarian donor in the world. We plan to continue our robust support in FY 2016 and FY 2017 while urging other donors to contribute to these ongoing emergencies. We will continue to ensure that we are using funds as efficiently as possible in order to meet current and unforeseen needs.

Question:

Central America Funding: In the FY 16 Omnibus appropriations bill, Congress conditioned assistance for the U.S. Strategy for Central America. Specifically, funding for the central governments of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador was conditioned. How much money is proposed for the Central American governments in FY 16? Please provide a breakdown of the amounts for each country.

Answer:

The FY 2016 appropriations bill directs that up to \$750 million may be made available for assistance for countries in Central America to implement the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America. While FY 2016 funding allocations have not been finalized, the Department and USAID estimate that \$279 million of a total possible allocation of \$750 million for Central America will benefit the central governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. This figure will continue to adjust as FY 2016 allocations move forward, and funds are obligated. In addition, because many programs that include central government assistance are regional and not bilateral, specific country-by-country estimates are not available at this time.

We expect that levels of central government assistance, and the levels that are withheld, will not be the same for each of the three countries, as we expect program variation across countries. In many instances, programs include both central government and non-central government beneficiaries, such as municipal-level governments, civil society, and private sector, in an integrated approach. Therefore, withholding funds from central governments may impact other participants in integrated programming as well.

The Department and USAID completed the 25 percent certification and reported it March 14. We are concerned that the remaining 50 percent level of withholding, coupled with other pre-obligation requirements established by Congress, will compromise and lead to closure of on-going successful programs.

Question:

I am pleased by the President's Strategy for Central America. The FY 17 request is \$1 billion, and according to the State Department, \$750 million of this funding will come from the State Department. What will the \$10 million in FY 17 Department of Homeland Security funding for Central America pay for? What about the \$14.6 million for the Treasury Department and the \$40.7 million for the US Department of Agriculture?

Answer:

The FY 2017 Treasury International Programs request includes \$14.6 million in funding to support the President's Strategy for Central America. Of this amount, \$12.5 million will be used for a one-time contribution to the Central America and Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance multi-donor trust fund set up at the World Bank. Participation from the United States will strengthen the economic resilience of Central American members, improving their financing resilience to shocks from natural disasters, and supporting improved long-term fiscal management and growth in participating countries. Donor support will also increase the financial management capacity of participating finance ministries, thus contributing to the "strengthening institutions" pillar of the President's Central America strategy. The remaining \$2.1 million in funding for Central America was an estimate for technical assistance to Central America based upon FY 2015 TIATA funding usage.

As for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the majority of the \$40.7 million included in its FY 2017 request is directed towards Animal and Plant Inspection Service (APHIS) in Central America that

involves activities in Guatemala and Panama. APHIS' work in Guatemala relates to controlling Medflies and Mexflies with preventative releases of sterile insects, detecting and responding to outbreaks when they occur, and maintaining a barrier against the spread of Medflies and Mexflies in Central America and Mexico. The APHIS work in Panama is related to preventing screwworm from moving North by working with Colombia, Panama, Mexico, and Central American countries to maintain a screwworm-free barrier zone in the Darien Gap along the border of Colombia and Panama. All of this work helps foster trade; in addition to smaller amounts in other Central American countries related to technical assistance for sanitary and phytosanitary issues.

Approximately \$8 million of the funding requested in FY 2017 for the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations will support law enforcement activities and investigations into human smuggling, particularly relating to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. These funds will support vetted units in Central America countries, as well as international human smuggling investigations and intelligence support and investigative case hours tied to human smuggling. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has estimated that approximately \$2 million in Immigration Examinations Fee Account funding for FY 2017 will be used to cover the costs associated the Central American Minors (CAM) Refugee/Parole Program. The funding will be used for an estimated 16 Refugee Circuit Ride Teams to travel to El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala to conduct refugee interviews. This funding will also cover personnel costs, a contract with International Organization for Migration, and expenses related to Department of State International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) costs.

Question:

Please provide a list of Guatemalan, Honduran, and Salvadoran military and police units receiving \$50,000 or more in assistance in FY 2016, or likely to receive that amount in FY 2017. This should include local police units in municipalities receiving community policing support. (Amounts for each unit not necessary).

Answer:

For El Salvador, the list of police units includes:

Transnational Anti-gang Unit (TAG)
 Grupo Especial Anti-Narcoticos (GEAN)
 Grupo Conjunto Cuscatlan (GCC)
 Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit (TCIU)
 Anti-Narcotics Division (DAN)
 GOPE (Police Special Operations Group)
 Unit of Analysis and Processing of Information (UCATI)
 Scientific and Technical Police Division (DPTC)
 Central Division of Investigation (DIN)
 Anti-Extortion Division (containing both anti-extortion task forces)

For Guatemala, the list of police units includes:

Dirección General de Inteligencia Civil (DIGICI)
 Dirección de Información Policial (DIP)
 División Métodos Especiales de Investigación (DIMEL)
 División de Armas y Explosivos (DIDAE)
 International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)

Fuerzas Especiales Policiales (FEP)
 Sub-Dirección General de Prevención del Delito
 Fuerza Especial Naval (FEN)
 División de Fuerza Especial (DIFEP)
 Bike Patrol Unit
 Crime Prevention Unit
 Sensitive Investigations Unit (SIU)
 Transnational Ant-gang Unit (TAG)
 Transnational Criminal Investigation Unit (TCIU)

For Honduras, the list of police units includes:

Inter-Agency Special Security Response Unit (TIGRES)
 Special Operations Tactical Group (GOET)
 Violent Crimes Task Force (VCTF)
 Criminal Structures Unit (formerly National Anti-Gang Unit-NAGU)
 Sensitive Investigations Unit (SIU)
 Transnational Anti-Gang Unit (TAG)
 Transnational Criminal Investigations Unit (TCIU)

Government of Honduras directorates or equivalent (not a unit):

Investigations Directorate (DPI)
 Police Education System (SEP)
 Telecommunications Directorate

Question:

LGBT in Central America: What specific State Department funding will support LGBT rights in Central America in FY 16 and FY 17?

Answer:

For both FY 2016 and 2017, through the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America, both USAID and the Department will implement assistance that supports vulnerable groups, including LGBTI persons, through an integrated approach. While the FY 2016 funding allocations have not been finalized, USAID expects to increase support for vulnerable groups, including LGBTI persons, subject to appropriations.

In FY 2016, USAID plans to launch a regional human rights program in Central America to strengthen the effectiveness of national human rights protection systems. Components of the program include support for prevention of human rights violations and promotion of early warning and protection systems for key vulnerable and marginalized populations, including LGBTI individuals and women. Separate from, but complementary to, the Strategy, DRL programming supports responding to human rights violations and abuses.

Question:

Child Migration Focus: To what extent are we targeting our Central America funding to the communities from which children are migrating in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras? Have we eliminated any State Department funded programs in these countries that do not meet our main foreign

policy objective of ensuring that children are not forced to make the perilous trek from Central America to the United States? Please provide a list of programs eliminated as a result of new policy objectives in the Northern Triangle.

Answer:

The U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America addresses the underlying conditions driving migration from the region through an integrated approach that focuses on prosperity, governance, and security. However, migration is only a symptom of the problems Central America faces that directly affect U.S. interests. The Department and USAID, in cooperation with Northern Triangle governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras work directly in communities that generate outbound migration.

For example, in El Salvador, the Department and USAID work in the ten most-violent municipalities, home to 70 percent of homicides nation-wide, as identified by the Government of El Salvador. In Guatemala, the Department is expanding the Model Police Precinct program into the Western Highlands communities – a primary source location of migration – to improve law enforcement, develop community policing, and conduct crime prevention programs particularly with at-risk youth. In Honduras, through the Central America Regional Security Initiative, the Department and USAID are supporting the place based strategy in San Pedro Sula, which has some of Honduras' highest homicide rates and is a primary source of migration. Nevertheless, to address the challenges Central America faces, we also work in other communities that, while facing less violence, face weak governance, lack of economic opportunity, and insecurity.

Although the Department and USAID have not entirely eliminated Central America programs under the Strategy, we have redirected funding for some programs and activities to better align with the Strategy. For example, in Guatemala, the Department suspended its corrections reform program in 2014, but has since been able to reengage with the new administration and resumed our corrections support program. USAID no longer capitalizes microfinance institutions as its main approach to developing the medium-, small-, and micro-enterprise sector. Based on expert research from the Inter-American Development Bank and others, USAID focuses resources on developing partnership and risk mitigation tools to incentivize local banks to expand productive loans and other financing directly to small businesses.

While we have made investments in Central America in security, we need to expand successful security programming as well as make new and deeper investments in prosperity and governance to achieve national-level impact. The \$750 million FY 2017 request is needed in Central America to address the economic, governance, and security drivers of migration from the region. We urge Congress to fully fund the request.

Most U.S. assistance to Central America supports the Strategy. However, the Administration continues to allocate funding for the Global Health Initiative in Central America, which is a priority separate from the Strategy.

Question:

What specific funding are we providing to help reintegrate children from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras into their communities when they are sent back from the United States or Mexico? Please provide detailed examples.

Answer:

USAID provided the International Organization for Migration (IOM) a \$7.6 million grant to assist the Northern Triangle governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras improve their capacity to receive and reintegrate unaccompanied children and families returned from the United States and Mexico. The USAID project supports the Northern Triangle governments to improve conditions at shelters for returning families and unaccompanied children; provide medical and psychosocial assistance for returning families and unaccompanied children; train government agencies responsible for children's and family services; distribute hygiene kits, phone cards, and transportation assistance to returnees; link returning unaccompanied children and families to community resources; and create a community response map to amplify government outreach to returnees and potential migrants in key communities. From September 2014 to December 2015, the project assisted more than 35,000 children and family units.

Question:

How much assistance in the FY 17 request for Mexico would support efforts, whether security, institution-building, or economic development, in Mexico's southern border zone near Guatemala and Belize?

Answer:

Under the Merida Initiative, the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) works with the Government of Mexico to create a 21st century border, one that facilitates legitimate commerce and movement of people while stemming the illicit flow of drugs, people, arms, and cash. INL programs aim to strengthen security at southern and northern border crossings, points of entry, and internal checkpoints throughout the country through the provision of training, equipment, and technical support.

The FY 2017 budget request includes \$18 million in International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) funding to continue current border security programs, which includes strengthening Mexico's southern border. Funding will support Mexico's efforts to create an interagency biometrics system, technical assistance for the National Migration Institute (INM), and the creation of a multi-agency secure communications system for the southern border.

To date, in addition to the broad support INL has provided for ongoing programs that strengthen border crossings with the United States, other points of entry, and internal checkpoints, INL has delivered approximately \$20 million in training, equipment, and advisory support to strengthen Mexico's southern border with Guatemala and Belize. Of the \$20 million, approximately \$2 million has been provided to Mexico's National Migration Institute (INM) for training and equipment, \$3.5 million has been spent on mobile kiosks to collect biometric data, and another \$13.4 million has been used to purchase Non-Intrusive Inspection Equipment (NIIE) for use throughout the southern border zone. Additional funding is being devoted to create canine teams in southern states bordering Guatemala and Belize.

Question:

Caribbean Basin Security Initiative: The Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) has been crucial in helping our partners in the Caribbean improve their capacity to combat crime and violence while also enhancing our own security. In carrying out CBSI, the State Department has carefully balanced prevention and enforcement efforts. The President requested \$48.4 million for CBSI in FY 2017 even though the subregion received \$57.7 million in CBSI assistance from Congress in FY 2016. Why was

CBSI funding for the Caribbean reduced? At a time when Venezuela's Petrodollars are drying up in the Caribbean, what are we doing to increase our engagement in this strategically important region?

Answer:

While the FY 2017 request for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) represents a \$10.1 million (17 percent) decrease from the \$58.5 million FY 2015 actual CBSI level, the region remains a U.S. priority, and reduced levels of CBSI funding will neither diminish the important citizen security partnerships we fostered in the Caribbean nor adversely impact our prior year and out-year planned investments. Prior year CBSI investments focused on acquiring high-cost equipment and interdiction capabilities.

The present and FY 2017 CBSI investments focus on maintenance and sustainment of prior year capital investments (e.g. maritime interdiction boats), capacity building, and training, which are lower cost. The FY 2017 \$48.4 million request will allow the U.S. government to build upon progress made in previous years, with an emphasis on regional information sharing and cooperation, justice sector reform, and initiatives that focus on youth and address the root causes of crime. The FY 2017 decrease is in Economic Support Fund (ESF) and International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) accounts. Compared to FY 2015, the \$23.4 million ESF request is a \$3.6 million (13 percent) decrease, and the \$20.0 million INCLE request is a \$5.0 million decrease (20 percent).

In response to the declining Petrodollars from Venezuela, the Vice President launched the Caribbean Energy Security Initiative (CESI) that aims to attract public and private investment critical to building sustainable and modern energy sectors by focusing efforts in three areas: improving energy governance, increasing access to finance, and enhancing donor coordination. Through CESI, we are working with Caribbean nations to put in place the legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks necessary to modernize and rationalize small island energy systems, bringing reliable and more affordable energy services and greater economic opportunity to the residents of this region.

Question:

Argentina is seeking U.S. support as it looks to improve its economy and reduce crime and violence. What specific actions will the Obama Administration take to support Argentina over the coming year? Will we reprogram IMET, INCLE or FMF funding from FY 16 to support Argentina?

Answer:

(SBU) Argentina's new government, which took office December 10, has indicated it seeks robust cooperation with the United States on political, economic, security, and environmental issues. Current U.S. assistance is limited to security cooperation programs, largely because the previous government placed substantial constraints on cooperation over several years. We hope to harness the momentum of President Obama's visit to Argentina March 23-24 to strengthen the U.S.-Argentina economic relationship and foster sustainable, inclusive economic growth that will lead to job creation and mutual prosperity. We are working with Argentina to increase commercial dialogue, promote small business development, provide citizen security and drug reduction assistance, and collaborate on trade and investment issues.

(SBU) The Department does not at this time intend to reprogram security assistance to Argentina because of limited funding and competing priorities in the region. However, the Department does intend to support defense reforms and professionalization in the military and will consider reprogramming in the future based on needs in this area. We anticipate stronger ties with senior

leadership within the military and law enforcement communities will lead to deeper partnerships with Argentina as we look to assist them with their transformational goals.

Question:

Foreign Military Financing for Colombia: The Foreign Military Financing request for Colombia increases from \$25 million in FY 2016 to \$38.525 million in FY 2017. What would these increased funds pay for?

Answer:

The additional Foreign Military Financing requested will be used to train, expand, and enhance the Colombian military's engineering capabilities so the Colombian government can project the state's presence into previously inaccessible areas, enabling it to deliver security, justice, and other critical public services to conflict-affected municipalities. Establishing a state presence in these areas will also facilitate Colombian demining efforts, a critical post-accord priority. In the post-accord period, the Government of Colombia will need to quickly fill the security vacuum created by the FARC's demobilization to prevent other illegal armed groups and narco-traffickers from expanding their influence; increased funding for counternarcotics battalions and aviation support increases the reach of the Colombian armed forces to address this issue. In these austere environments, Colombian military engineers will be needed to construct new bases, police stations, and related infrastructure. The Colombian authorities will undertake these construction projects with Colombian funding, but U.S. assistance will catalyze Colombia's efforts by strengthening their military engineering capacity.

Question:

How much of the FY 17 INCLE request for Colombia would support manual coca eradication? Is there a target amount of hectares to be eradicated in FY 2016 and FY 2017?

Answer:

The FY 2017 INCLE request for the manual eradication program is \$16 million. The FY 2016 target is 16,000 hectares, an increase over the 10,600 hectare target for FY 2015. The FY 2017 target will be subject to a variety of factors, including progress toward the FY 2016 goal, the ongoing peace negotiations, and the resulting provisions of an anticipated peace accord relating to coca eradication. In light of the ongoing negotiations, INL has developed a flexible budget plan that will allow us to respond to unforeseen developments while still prioritizing programs that will continue independently of a peace agreement. The FY 2017 request level was determined by estimating the amount of U.S. assistance that would be appropriate if or when the Government of Colombia chooses to utilize manual eradication as a major element of its nationwide peace implementation plan, which includes a new counter narcotics strategy.

Question:

Mexico and Guyana Remediation: DRL Assistant Secretary Malinowski said recently that military units in Mexico and Guyana, whose aid was frozen under the Leahy Law, were "remediated" last year, and are now receiving aid again, after it was determined that effective steps were taken to hold the abusers accountable. With the new Leahy remediation policy in place, does the Secretary expect many new remediations in the coming year in the Americas (or worldwide)?

Answer:

Thus far there have been five successful remediation cases: one in Mexico, one in Guyana, one in Georgia, and two in Afghanistan. We are in the process of remediating another case in Mexico, which will be notified to Congress in the near future. There are currently no other remediation cases under review, but we anticipate that others will arise on a periodic basis.

The ultimate purpose of both the State and DoD Leahy law is to promote accountability for human rights violations. To that end, both the DoD and State Leahy laws contain provisions that allow the resumption of U.S. assistance to ineligible units if their government is taking appropriate remediation measures. These may include impartial and thorough investigations; as appropriate, impartial and thorough prosecutions or administrative actions; and appropriate and proportional sentencing or comparable administrative actions.

Question:

The Minsk Agreement remains a ceasefire on paper only as fighting continues along the line of contact while steps needed to bring peace and restore Ukraine's territorial integrity are further delayed. At what point do we move beyond Minsk? And when do we make good on our promise to not simply keep sanctions on Russia in place, but to increase the cost of Vladimir Putin's destabilizing aggression in Ukraine?

Answer:

We continue to believe that the Minsk agreements are the best and only way to achieve peace in eastern Ukraine.

Recently, we have intensified our diplomacy to support efforts to support discussions in the Normandy format to resolve the conflict. President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and other senior U.S. officials continue to reinforce to Russia that Moscow must fully implement its Minsk commitments, including a durable ceasefire and full access for the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission. We also continually discuss with the Normandy powers how we can best support their efforts.

We have also been very clear with Moscow that sanctions will remain in place until Russia fully implements Minsk and returns Crimea to Ukraine. We are prepared to increase costs on Russia if it take new aggressive actions in Ukraine.

Question:

What is the Department's view of the status of the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation? Is this a binding agreement? Does it pose any obstacle to the additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces anywhere on the territory of any NATO member?

Answer:

The United States and its NATO Allies continue to abide by the political statements contained in the NATO-Russia Founding Act. Russia, by contrast, through its actions against its neighbor Ukraine, has both violated international law and contravened the commitments it made in the Founding Act.

The Founding Act states that, "in the current and foreseeable security environment, the Alliance will carry out its collective defense and other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces. Accordingly, it will have to rely on adequate infrastructure commensurate with the above tasks. In this context, reinforcement may take place, when necessary, in the event of

defense against a threat of aggression and missions in support of peace consistent with the United Nations Charter and the OSCE governing principles, as well as for exercises consistent with the adapted CFE Treaty, the provisions of the Vienna Document 1994 and mutually agreed transparency measures.”

The language of the Founding Act was specifically crafted to give NATO Allies the flexibility they need to meet their deterrence and defense obligations. The Founding Act does not constrain any current or foreseen U.S. plans to support NATO Allies, including prepositioning of equipment in Europe and rotational force deployments. The State Department appreciates Congress’ ongoing support for the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), which continues to fund the United States’ ability to enhance our support to NATO Allies.

Question:

The situation in Yemen is dire, both politically and from a humanitarian perspective. Since the conflict began, over 80% of the Yemeni population requires some form of humanitarian assistance. The \$40 million request for Yemen seeks to cover many areas of the transition in Yemen: democracy and governance, education, health, nutrition, water and economic growth. How will these initiatives be prioritized? Without an embassy presence, how do the State Department and USAID intend to conduct proper oversight? If the security environment persists – from external actors, the civil war and the lasting presence of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), what are the prospects for recovery in Yemen? How does the Administration intend to promote the importance of reconciliation and recovery in Yemen when external actors appear unwilling to compromise?

Answer:

Yemen will face significant challenges once it emerges from the current conflict and returns to a political transition process. Our priority will be to work with our partners in the international and NGO communities to restore the right political, security, and economic conditions to set Yemen back on the path towards recovery.

FY 2017 funds will permit us to help the Yemeni people to stabilize their economy, restore their health and education systems, and renew a peaceful political transition process. Once a peace process is defined and the security environment is permissive, the State Department and USAID will rapidly resume and sustain our non-humanitarian assistance and programming, adapting activities to post-conflict realities and priorities. In order to best accomplish this, the Yemen Affairs Unit stationed in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, led by Ambassador Matthew Tueller, continues its engagement with the Yemeni government to identify and prioritize early goals and objectives. We also continue to coordinate closely with other donors regarding assistance needs and priorities.

At present, most non-humanitarian programs remain suspended due to the conflict. We need to be fully prepared and appropriately resourced to resume assistance activities as soon as opportunities emerge; Yemen’s return to a political transition will be a critical time to prevent further deterioration and destabilization and to support positive momentum. USAID uses a third party monitoring and evaluation contractor to monitor and evaluate activities. These monitoring and evaluation specialists provide an objective, independent assessment of program performance, measuring assistance activities against defined performance targets and development objectives. We will only restart suspended activities when we assess that the security environment is permissive enough for our implementing partners and third party monitoring partners to mobilize and perform their responsibilities.

The security situation will doubtless be a challenge for a nascent transitional government. The collapse of Yemen’s security forces has strengthened Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and enabled the emergence of an Islamic State faction in Yemen. This is why we must be in a position to respond

quickly to restart our security assistance and counterterrorism programming. We also continue in our efforts to press for a negotiated solution to the conflict; only once Yemen returns to a peaceful political transition can it begin to fully confront the expanded threat posed by extremist groups.

We have long said there is no military solution to this conflict. We are working diligently to support the UN Special Envoy in his efforts to secure a cessation of hostilities and to resume negotiations as soon as possible. The recently announced cessation of hostilities along the Saudi/Yemeni border is encouraging, and we continue to press the parties to broaden the ceasefire ahead of the next round of talks in order to build momentum for progress.

Question:

What has Pakistan done *specifically* to combat the Haqqani Network and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba since 2013?

Answer:

For the past two years, Pakistan, using our security assistance, has conducted significant operations against militant groups, which have uprooted terrorists operating in the border region, including the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). These operations have targeted North Waziristan, the traditional stronghold of the Haqqani Network, and have disrupted their activities to a limited extent. In addition to hampering the Haqqani Network, these operations have successfully destroyed many terrorist safe havens and recovered more than 160 tons of improvised explosive device (IED) precursors. In October 2015, Pakistan banned media coverage of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and its affiliated charities.

While recognizing these measures, we have repeatedly stressed to the Pakistani leadership that there are additional steps they must take to target all terrorist groups without discrimination, as they have publically pledged to do. We continually press Pakistan, including last month during the U.S. Pakistani Strategic Dialogue Ministerial, to take direct, specific, and lasting steps to constrain the Taliban – including the Haqqani Network – and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and degrade their operational capabilities.

Question:

Following the Mumbai attacks in 2008, the Administration asked the Government of Pakistan to take a few specific actions, including at the United Nations 1267 Committee. Could you report back on the progress of those actions?

Answer:

We continue to follow the developments in this case closely, and emphasize repeatedly to the Government of Pakistan the importance of effective resolution. Unfortunately, the trial of seven individuals, including Zaki-ur Rehman Lakhvi, accused of conspiracy and abetting of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba's November 2008 Mumbai attacks, is progressing slowly. The Pakistani court has filed a request with the Indian government to interview all 24 Indian witnesses as the next step in the case. While we acknowledge the independence of the Pakistani judiciary, we are concerned that this filing could serve to further delay proceedings.

Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) and its affiliates, Jamaat-ud-Dawa and Falah-e-Insaniyat Foundation, are designated according to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1267. China is maintaining a hold on three U.S. nominations of LeT members in the 1267 Committee. We continue to discuss with Pakistan our concerns about implementation of UN Security Council resolutions, including required

asset freezes of designated entities and individuals. Under Pakistan's National Action Plan, we have seen evidence of increased Pakistani efforts to address terror finance vulnerabilities in their banking system more broadly. In addition, Pakistan recently co-sponsored with the United States the designation of an individual connected to Al-Qa'ida at the United Nations 1267 Committee.

Question:

Sri Lanka: We are pleased by the tremendous change in tone and tenor of the current government in Sri Lanka. As we look to further our engagement with this new government, what concrete actions, beyond sponsoring the United Nations Human Rights Council resolution, has the government taken on accountability, military normalization, and land return?

Answer:

We welcome and support the reforms implemented by the current government and continue to urge further progress as Sri Lanka pursues its long-term path to peace, stability, and prosperity.

On justice and accountability, the government has begun a national consultation process to hear from the Sri Lankan people about their needs and interests in justice mechanisms that will provide closure and redress to victims and heal the wounds of war. It has also consulted with international justice experts from Japan and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The government welcomed a visit by the UN Human Rights Chief and two visits by the UN Special Rapporteur for Transitional Justice. We have encouraged an inclusive consultation process to ensure any justice mechanisms are credible, transparent, independent, and enjoy support from Sri Lanka's diverse communities.

The government has informed us that military personnel have largely returned to their barracks, and the last military checkpoint to the northern former conflict zone was closed in August 2015. In October, a High Court convicted four members of the Army for sexually assaulting two women in the North, the first ever conviction of security sector personnel for post-war abuses. In February 2015, an ordinance used by the Rajapaksa regime to grant police duties to the armed forces was allowed to lapse, and a controversial military general who had been accused of war crimes was forced to retire in December.

The government has returned more than 3,200 acres of land in the Northern and Eastern Provinces to its rightful owners.

In addition, the government has launched its official public consultation website on constitutional reforms and mandated the parliament to draft a constitution that is inclusive and democratic.

We discussed these and many other issues during February's inaugural U.S.-Sri Lanka Partnership Dialogue, and they will remain a priority for further discussions. We will use future engagements to press for progress and continued reforms on transitional justice, security sector reform, and land return and to ensure the United States is providing appropriate and targeted technical assistance, capacity-building, and institutional knowledge as the Sri Lankan government tackles these challenging issues.

Question:

What actions does the State Department feel are necessary in order to allow Sri Lanka to increase its participation in United Nations peacekeeping?


Answer:

The United Nations makes the final decision on what capacities are needed for specific peacekeeping missions, and which countries meet its standards for training, equipment, and human rights.

Sri Lanka is an active participant in UN peacekeeping, contributing about 500 uniformed personnel to some of the most challenging missions, such as those in the Central African Republic and South Sudan. Sri Lanka made a substantial pledge at the September 2015 Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping, including up to four rapidly-deployable battalions, special forces companies, a combat engineering company, a counter-improvised explosive device (IED) company, and two combat transportation companies. Sri Lanka has also proposed creating an internal peacekeeping command that would integrate the peacekeeping capabilities of the various Sri Lankan armed services and would be the focal point for training, equipping, and strategic planning for peacekeeping deployments.

Sri Lanka has already registered these pledges in the UN's tracking system, and the UN has accepted the offer of a combat transportation company for the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali. The UN recently completed an initial advisory and assessment visit to Sri Lanka to review the company. A U.S. observer participated in this assessment visit, which went well. The next step will be the drafting and signing of a memorandum of understanding between the UN and the Sri Lankan government, followed by a pre-deployment inventory of contingent-owned equipment, and a final determination of the unit's readiness, including the unit's skills as well as the condition and operability of the equipment.

The Department of State is considering what additional assistance it might provide, including improving and enhancing Sri Lanka's peacekeeping training center and additional equipment and training for deployments, in particular for counter-IED.



**Questions for the Record Submitted to
 Secretary of State John F. Kerry
 Chairman Edward R. Royce
 Ranking Member Eliot Engel
 House Committee on Foreign Affairs
 February 25, 2016**

Question:

What is the State Department's overarching strategy for responding to Russian propaganda, particularly in countries bordering Russia where Russian-language television content is dominated by Kremlin-backed broadcasts? How are the Department's efforts coordinated with the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) with respect to countering Russian propaganda and what is the "division of labor" between the two agencies? In addition to existing content such as the BBG's "Current Time" program and the BBG's planned expansion of Russian-language content, what is the plan for counterprogramming Russia's broadcasts with high-quality Russian-language entertainment? What partners among governments and the private sector are contributing to such an effort and what are their specific roles? What other U.S. Government agencies are involved and what are their roles? What is the timeline for getting this content on the air? How will success of this strategy be measured? What complementary efforts are being considered to broadcast similar Russian-language content within Russia? Where are the Department's efforts to counter Russian propaganda captured in the FY 2017 budget submission and what is the Department's total funding allocation to this effort? Of the total funding allocated by the Department, what percentage is dedicated to the production of television content in the Russian language with an overt entertainment or "infotainment" theme?

Answer:

The Kremlin is rapidly disseminating disinformation, part of a concerted effort to undermine trust in Western institutions and erode freedom of the press. Research shows that despite Moscow's efforts and resources devoted to this objective, they have limited effectiveness abroad: less than a third of Europeans polled outside of Russia are confident that Putin will do the right thing in world affairs or see Russia favorably. In these same European countries, views of the United States are much more positive; 69% viewed the U.S. favorably.

Capitalizing on this public goodwill, the State Department is leading a coordinated effort to support the free flow of information, expand independent media, root out corruption, and refute Russian government disinformation. Our efforts extend across a range of diplomatic tools as we proactively amplify key U.S. government messages, correct disinformation, engage opinion leaders, encourage independent voices, and forge and maintain people-to-people ties.

The Department employs a combination of short-term messaging strategies with medium- and long-term programs to boost resilience and build capacity to recognize and reject Russian government disinformation. The Department supports our overseas posts in times of heightened Kremlin messaging. Armed with the facts, our missions abroad are able to adapt the content and materials we supply to their own audiences and rapidly amplify the truth. We have also increased our capacity to proactively deliver our messages in Russian by forming a cadre of Russian-speaking officers to engage with the media and introducing a Russian-language, policy-oriented Twitter handle. We augment this messaging activity by providing foreign audiences with opportunities to engage directly with experts, opinion leaders, and third party groups.

The Department is implementing programs that support independent media and investigative journalists in countries throughout the region, including Azerbaijan, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia, Ukraine, and the Baltics. We have developed exchanges to encourage independent media voices, including workshops on digital skills and investigative journalism, and support for a Digital Communicators Network of more than 1,000 members who bring accurate, objective information to regional audiences.

At the same time, we are supporting efforts to engage ethnic Russian populations by expanding our English language training programs and professional exchanges. These cost-effective programs create lasting educational and professional linkages and increase English proficiency of students and educators, helping remove language as a barrier for thought leaders to understand U.S. policy and culture.

U.S. public diplomacy also includes NATO and U.S. military outreach and media engagement. These high visibility engagements help dispel the Russian government's anti-NATO messages and serve as opportunities to explain our security partnerships. Last year the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs provided a new fund to support embassy public affairs teams in developing new, innovative public outreach projects pegged to U.S. military exercises in Europe. These interactions between people are the cornerstone of our strategy and absolutely essential in refuting disinformation.

We continue to use our public diplomacy tools to deepen people-to-people ties in an admittedly challenging political environment. In the past year, the State Department has designed and implemented a range of programs in the region that build relationships based on common interests and perceptions. Based on participant feedback, we know these programs are having a positive net effect. In addition to anecdotal evidence, we also conduct evaluations of our programs to ensure impact.

The BBG receives steady input from Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs to assist with their strategic and tactical planning. The BBG is an active participant in a number of ongoing working groups at State, through which it apprises the Department of its efforts and provides analysis of current media trends. In its own work, the BBG maintains a robust response to Russian disinformation through the combined work of Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, which employ flexible, innovative, and cross-platform programming around the world to counter the Kremlin's strident anti-American messaging with fact-based journalism.

Public Diplomacy efforts to counter propaganda are supported primarily through our work with State's International Information Programs bureau, the Bureau of Public Affairs, and all the other activities that our embassies and Washington-based staff do to address Russian messaging. This work is reflected in our budget in the funding requested to support operations. In addition to approximately \$3M in anticipated spending from public diplomacy's base budget, we have requested \$1.5M in programming to support our work in this space for FY 2017. As part of a broader effort to counter Russian pressure, and in parallel with our public diplomacy work, in FY 2017, the Department is requesting approximately \$121 million in bilateral ESF assistance funding to support civil society and independent media in the Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia region, in addition to the funding that is centrally managed by DRL and USAID.

The Department works to ensure that our resources are directed in the most effective way, by maintaining robust monitoring systems and conducting quantitative and qualitative evaluations of its programs. Such evaluations demonstrate whether past and current strategies are effective and indicate when changes are needed.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
Representative Dana Rohrabacher (#1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2016**

Question:

Earlier this month, the Obama Administration approved the sale and transfer of eight F-16s to Pakistan. Why was the release of Dr. Afridi not a pre-condition of that sale?

Answer:

As with all arms transfers, the Administration's decision to support the sale of eight F-16s to Pakistan was based on our assessment that the transfer would support U.S. national security interests. F-16s enable the Pakistani military to more effectively conduct operations against militants in its tribal regions, at all hours, while minimizing collateral damage. These operations reduce the ability of militants to use Pakistani territory as a safe haven for terrorism and a base of support for the insurgency in Afghanistan. They are in the interest of the United States, Pakistan, and our partners in the region.

The Administration believes Dr. Afridi has been unjustly imprisoned and we have clearly communicated our position on Dr. Afridi's case to Pakistan, both in public and in private. We continue to raise this issue at the highest levels with Pakistan's leadership. As required by the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act (SFOAA) 2014, SFOAA 2015, and SFOAA 2016, we have already withheld \$99 million in assistance from Pakistan over the past three years because the Government of Pakistan has not released Dr. Afridi.

Question:

Pakistan uses its weapons to slaughter Baloch and other people. Pakistan also aided in the creation of the Taliban and continues to destabilize Afghanistan. How many more times must Pakistan act against U.S. national security interests before we quit providing them with money and weapons?

Answer:

Sustained civilian and security assistance is critical to achieving U.S. strategic goals in Pakistan and in the region. A secure, stable, prosperous Pakistan that plays a constructive role in the region is in our national security interest. U.S. security assistance has helped Pakistan increase its counterinsurgency and counterterrorism capabilities, and helped to disrupt and dismantle core al-Qa'ida elements. U.S. support to Pakistan's clearing operations has also helped extend the reach of the Government of Pakistan in North Waziristan and other tribal areas. Transitioning tribal areas to Government of Pakistan control will prevent the area from re-emerging as a terrorist safe haven, which serves the interests of U.S., coalition and Afghan forces on the other side of the border. When providing equipment or training to Pakistan, we thoroughly vet all units under consideration. We require full compliance with U.S. laws (in particular the Leahy amendment) by ensuring that no security assistance goes to any units or individuals that have committed gross violations of human rights. Civilian assistance supports long-term stability, economic growth, and governance improvements in a country of 190 million people grappling with energy problems, insecurity, and violent extremism.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State John F. Kerry by
Representative Brad Sherman
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2016**

Question:

During our exchange at the hearing I asked about the potential sale of Su-30 fighters from Russia to Iran, and the procedure for approval (or hopefully disapproval) under Paragraph 5 of Annex B UNSCR 2231, which states that certain arms transfers to Iran, including combat aircraft, require case-by-case approval by the Security Council, including presumably an absence of disapproval by all of the five the permanent members. I believe we misunderstood each other, as you referenced in response to my question a committee that would examine such transfers. You were referring, I believe now, to the so-called JCPOA procurement channel that will examine Iranian orders for items that Tehran believes it needs for its permitted nuclear program.

1. I want to give you the opportunity to clarify for the record -- for the arms described by that paragraph, UNSCR 2231, Annex B, Paragraph 5, the Security Council must approve transfers to Iran of such arms to Iran on a case-by-case basis, including Su-30s fighters, correct?

2. Second, is it safe to assume the United States would be disinclined toward such a sale and would, if need be, use our veto if a proposal for such a sale were presented for decision in the Security Council?

Answer:

1. Yes. Arms transfers described by Paragraph 5, Annex B of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2231, must be approved by the UN Security Council in advance on a case-by-case basis. This restriction continues for five years after JCPOA Adoption Day (or until the IAEA reaches the broader conclusion that all nuclear material in Iran remains in peaceful activities, whichever is earlier). Among the types of arms to which this provision applies are combat aircraft, and Su-30 fighters are combat aircraft.
 2. We oppose the sale of combat aircraft to Iran. The United States would be able to block UN Security Council approval of any transfer of weapons covered by the restrictions that remain in force under UNSCR 2231, and it is difficult to imagine any circumstance in which we would consider allowing the Council to approve such a transfer.
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**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State John Kerry
Congressman Joe Wilson
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2016**

Question:

Since the ceasefire agreement with Russia does not include 'terrorist' organizations, won't it allow Russia to continue to attack the rebels in Aleppo and Idlib under the pretext of attacking Jabhat Al-Nusra, which is mixed in with other rebel groups?

Answer:

We've always said we'll judge Russia by its actions, not its words. That remains the case following the announcement of a path toward a ceasefire. We have been clear-eyed about Russian actions in Syria. This is a moment of truth for Russia. Moscow has said that its mission in Syria is limited and it has committed to a political transition; we are seeing some positive actions. We expect that as a cessation of hostilities is implemented, parties on the ground will have an opportunity to distance themselves from groups excluded from the cessation. We have been clear that indiscriminate attacks and attacks targeting civilians in Syria by both the Assad regime and Russia must stop. On February 11, all International Syria Support Group members, including Russia, unanimously committed to immediately facilitate the full implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2254 and reaffirmed their readiness to carry out all commitments set forth in the resolution, including pressing for the end of the indiscriminate use of weapons. We still have profound differences with Russia on a number of issues in Syria. However, we owe it to the Syrian people to find ways to ease their suffering.

Question:

The ceasefire agreement does not address the central questions of the conflict, the future of the Assad regime in particular, so isn't it bound to break down?

Answer:

On February 22, the United States and Russia announced the adoption of a broad cessation of hostilities in Syria. The cessation requires the Assad Regime and Russia stop aerial bombardment of civilians, civilian infrastructure, and those opposition groups that have joined the cessation of hostilities. This cessation is part of the larger International Syria Support Group process that is working towards a political transition in Syria. The cessation is not dependent on Assad's role in Syria, but a way to establish the conditions for a political transition away from Assad.

As part of the International Syria Support Group process, Russia and Iran signed onto the November 14 Vienna Statement which reaffirms key Geneva Communique principles, most importantly, a commitment to a political transition and a consensus on a timetable for that a political transition, including agreeing to free and fair elections administered under UN supervision to ensure the highest international standards pursuant to a new constitution within 18 months.

In December, Russia voted in favor of UNSCR 2254 which calls for the negotiating teams to come to a consensus on President Assad's fate within six months of the beginning of negotiations

in Geneva between the Syrian Opposition and Regime. The US does not support a Syrian government in which Asad remains in power.

Question:

How does any ceasefire deal work if Syria's al-Qa'ida affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra is excluded and is present on most fighting fronts between the regime and the rebels in northern Syria? In addition, the regime is claiming the ceasefire will not apply to the besieged town of Daraya in the Damascus area on the grounds of a Jabhat al-Nusra presence there. The Southern Front- a U.S. backed rebel coalition in southern Syria- rejects a ceasefire if Daraya is not included.

How do you propose to deal with these complications?

Answer:

Special Envoy for Syria Michael Ratney is in contact with moderate armed groups in Syria to stress that Jabhat al-Nusra will not be part of the cessation and we expect that parties on the ground will have to distance themselves from groups excluded from the cessation. The February 22 joint statement announcing the terms of the Cessation of Hostilities stated the Russian Federation and United States will work together, and with other members of the Cessation of Hostilities Task Force, to delineate the territory held by "Daesh," "Jabhat al-Nusra" and other terrorist organizations designated by the UN Security Council, which are excluded from the cessation of hostilities. Moderate opposition groups and civilians in Darayya are protected under this definition of the cessation of hostilities.

Question:

What is the proposed strategy now for removing Islamic State from the remaining northern border areas with Turkey? The original strategy was to back rebel groups to push back IS from the northern border areas in Aleppo province but they have come under attack from the primarily Kurdish SDF coalition operating out of Afrin to the west of these rebels. The U.S. also has links with SDF in fighting IS further east in Syria (Raqqah & Hasakah provinces) on a rather successful basis.

So is the strategy to still back the north Aleppo rebels or to switch to the SDF operating out of Afrin?

Answer:

We are working with the Government of Turkey, the international C-Da'esh Coalition, and Syrian Arab partners to clear Da'esh out of northwest Syria and secure the last 98-kilometer stretch of Da'esh-held Turkey-Syria border. We will continue to work with the Government of Turkey and the Syrian opposition to ensure these gains are sustainable. In northeastern Syria, the Coalition-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have cleared Da'esh from the Turkey-Syria border east of the Euphrates. In December 2015 the SDF seized the Tishrin Dam from Da'esh, a critical bottleneck on the Da'esh supply route to the Turkish border. Most recently, in February, the SDF seized Shaddadi, east of Raqqah, further constricting Da'esh maneuverability between Raqqah and Mosul and Syria and Iraq. However, as we have said before, recent moves by the YPG north of Aleppo, which heightened tensions with Turkey and with Arab opposition forces, are counterproductive and undermine our

collective, cooperative efforts in northern Syria to degrade and defeat Da'esh. We have not and will not recognize any PYD "self-rule" autonomous zone. We remain committed to the unity and territorial integrity of Syria. We are focused on advancing a genuine, negotiated political transition towards an inclusive government that is capable of serving the interests of all the Syrian people.

Question:

Can you update us on where talks with Israel stand on a new Memorandum of Understanding that will meet Israel's growing threats?

Answer:

Our commitment to Israel's security is steadfast, and our close cooperation with the Israeli government on military and security issues continues. As Prime Minister Netanyahu recognized during his 2015 speech to the UN General Assembly, "we never forget that the most important partner that Israel has ... always been, and will always be, the United States of America."

Israel remains the leading recipient worldwide of U.S. Foreign Military Financing (FMF). The current ten-year \$30 billion Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. and Israel, under which Israel currently receives \$3.1 billion per year, is just one example of our strong, enduring partnership and the U.S. commitment to Israel's security.

During their meeting on November 9, 2015, the President and Prime Minister Netanyahu agreed to resume formal talks on a new MOU to succeed the current one, which expires at the end of Fiscal Year 2018. Several rounds of talks with the Israelis have been held since then. We hope to reach a new MOU that will build on the United States' historic and enduring commitment to Israel's security, provide maximum benefit to both Israel and the United States, and serve as the foundation for the bilateral security relationship well through the next decade. Even as we grapple with a particularly challenging budget environment, this Administration's commitment to Israel's security is such that we are prepared to sign an MOU with Israel that would constitute the largest single pledge of military assistance to any country in U.S. history.

Question:

How does the administration factor in Israel's qualitative military edge (QME) needs when considering huge sales of sophisticated weaponry as part of the anti-ISIS campaign into the region? Does it worry you that we are providing such sophisticated weapons to regimes whose futures are so much in doubt? What assurances do we have that those capabilities can't be used against us or our close allies in the future?

Answer:

The United States is committed to ensuring Israel maintains its Qualitative Military Edge (QME), defined as Israel's ability to counter and defeat credible military threats from any individual state, coalition of states or non-state actors, while sustaining minimal damage or casualties. The United States works with Israel to ensure that it is equipped with highly advanced weapons systems in line with QME goals. Through both our government-to-government Foreign Military Sales program and Direct Commercial Sales, we are able to provide Israel with advanced products and systems that are restricted to our closest allies and partners.

We are also currently providing expedited assistance to numerous partners, including Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and other counter-ISIL coalition members. We continue to consider Israel's QME as we work to provide our partners with the critical equipment, sustainment, and training necessary to combat ISIL. We have an open dialogue with our Israeli partners to discuss regional threats and the rapidly changing environment in the Middle East to ensure Israel's security is protected.

We also continue to stress the importance of safeguarding U.S.-origin items to our C-ISIL partners, and we continue to monitor not only the positive control of these items, but to ensure that these systems and weapons are being used in accordance with our values and intended use.

Question:

How have Iran's terrorist activities been affected by the JCPOA and the subsequent lifting of sanctions? Has Iranian support for terrorism increased or decreased?

Answer:

Iran has continued its support for terrorism, as it has done for the past three decades. This includes continued support for Lebanese Hezbollah, Palestinian terrorist groups in Gaza, Kata'ib Hizballah in Iraq, and Shia militant groups in Syria. For that reason, Iran is and remains a designated State Sponsor of Terrorism. This is one reason why our non-nuclear related sanctions on Iran remain in place, and why we will continue to work with our partners in the region to counter Iran's malign activities, regardless of the source of funds for those activities. We have numerous domestic authorities – including sanctions – to counter Iran's support for terrorism and other destabilizing activities. We will continue to enforce aggressively our sanctions related to Iran's support for terrorism, ballistic missile activities, destabilizing activities in the region, and human rights abuses.

Question:

Does the U.S. have an estimate of the amount of funding Iran provides to Hezbollah? How are these funds being transferred? If we see an Iranian bank transfer funds for the benefit of Hezbollah, will the U.S. immediately sanction that bank?

Answer:

The U.S. government has and will continue to use our authorities to expose and target Hezbollah's financial, commercial, and terrorist activities around the world. In particular, we have and will continue to use our authorities under the Hizballah International Financing Protection Act to target financial institutions that knowingly facilitate significant transactions or engage in money laundering activities on behalf of Hizballah. The State Department, Treasury, and our partners in the Intelligence Community are constantly looking for solid evidence of such activity. When we see evidence, we will build a case, and we will take action. We would be happy to discuss more details regarding Iran's funding Hizballah in a classified setting.

Question:

Mr. Secretary, shouldn't we be going after the infrastructure that allows Iran to continue its missile program? Do you have any plans to do so?

Answer:

We rely on a broad set of multilateral and unilateral tools to impede and disrupt Iran's missile development efforts. Specifically, we continue to work with partners – including many of the over one hundred governments around the world that have endorsed the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) – to interdict shipments related to weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, and related items, including Iran's prohibited missile-related imports or exports. We also use our participation in the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) to prevent the spread of critical missile technologies and raise awareness among the 33 other MTCR Partners of the proliferation concerns posed by Iran's missile development, procurement, and proliferation activities. We bolster these multilateral efforts through our bilateral cooperation with countries to prevent transfers to Iran's missile program, to promote thorough UNSCR implementation, and to target Iranian missile proliferation activities in third countries. In addition, we continue to use domestic authorities to impose sanctions on entities connected to Iran's ballistic missile programs, as warranted.

Question:

Beyond the 11 entities sanctioned for supporting Iran's missile program, has the administration imposed any sanctions targeting Iran non-nuclear activities since the JCPOA was reached? Any sanctions for supporting terrorism? Any sanctions for supporting the Assad regime? Any sanctions for human rights violations? Any sanctions for supporting Shiite militias in Iraq?

Answer:

All of our other sanctions not related to Iran's nuclear program, whether for Iran's destabilizing activities within the region, human rights abuses, support for terrorism, or ballistic missiles programs, remain in place and continue to be enforced. As you note, the most recent example of our continued enforcement is the January 17 designation of three entities and eight individuals involved in a procurement network for Iran's ballistic missiles program. These designations effectively cut these persons off from the U.S. financial system, and secondary sanctions continue to attach to certain transactions involving these designated individuals and entities.

The JCPOA was negotiated to address our concerns over Iran's nuclear program and therefore did not impact our authority or ability to impose sanctions on Iran's non-nuclear activities in the future.

Question:

There is a long history of nuclear and missile cooperation between Iran and North Korea. North Korea has already demonstrated its capability to explode a nuclear device. How confident are you that if Iran were to use North Korean nuclear facilities, that we would know about it? If we did, would that lead to a full snapback of sanctions?

Answer:

The United States closely monitors and reviews all available information on the DPRK's dealings related to its WMD programs and its proliferation activities worldwide, as well as any efforts by Iran to acquire proliferation-sensitive materials or technologies. We continue to take concerted efforts, both nationally and multilaterally, to impede the DPRK's proliferation activities, including through the full suite of relevant U.S. unilateral sanctions measures and by

urging all countries to implement relevant UN Security Council resolutions concerning the DPRK.

We also continue to do the same with respect to Iran, both unilaterally and multilaterally, in accordance with UNSCR 2231 (2015) and the provisions of the Joint Comprehensive Plans of Action (JCPOA). We are committed to ensuring that Iran fulfills all of its nuclear-related commitments in a verifiable and complete manner. Because there is comprehensive IAEA monitoring of the entire fuel cycle within Iran, we are confident that we will know if Iran attempts to cheat, including through the introduction of foreign technology or material into Iran's nuclear fuel cycle that is contrary to the JCPOA. Should Iran violate its commitments under the JCPOA, we retain a wide range of options to respond, whether in the case of significant non-performance by Iran, or more minor instances of noncompliance, including the ability to snapback both national and multilateral nuclear-related sanctions. This provides us with significant leverage to deter Iranian noncompliance and allows us to respond appropriately and proportionately to any Iranian violations.

Question:

What is the U.S. doing to confront destabilizing Iranian actions in Lebanon, in Syria, in Yemen, in Iraq and in the Palestinian territories?

Answer:

Iran's destabilizing activities in the region are a threat to us and our allies, and they are a top concern of the Administration. We work intensively with our partners in the region, including the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Israel, to deter and disrupt Iranian threats. Examples of such cooperation include diplomatic and sanctions pressure on Mahan Air, ongoing security cooperation with the GCC following the Camp David summit, sanctions on a range of Iranian entities for actions in Syria, Israel's seizure of the Klos C vessel carrying weapons bound for Gaza in 2014, military and diplomatic efforts to prevent an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) naval flotilla from docking in Yemen in April 2015, and the September 25, 2015, seizure of the Nasir dhow carrying weapons from Iran that we assess were bound for Yemen.

We also have numerous domestic authorities – including sanctions – to counter Iran's support for terrorism or other destabilizing activities. We will continue to aggressively enforce our sanctions against Iran's support for terrorism, destabilizing activities in the region, ballistic missile development, and human rights abuses.

Question:

In determining whether to impose sanctions on Iran for violations of the JCPOA or for non-nuclear reasons, how do Iranian threats to abandon the JCPOA play into your considerations?

Answer:

We are committed to promoting the effective implementation of the JCPOA and ensuring that Iran complies with all of its commitments. We retain a wide range of options to deal with any failure by Iran to fulfill its nuclear-related commitments, whether significant non-performance or more minor instances of non-compliance.

Iran's incentives to stick to its JCPOA commitments are just as strong after Implementation Day as they were before. Namely, Iran wants the sanctions relief specified in the JCPOA, which is predicated upon Iran's continued compliance with the JCPOA.

We remain concerned about Iran's support for terrorism, destabilizing activities in the region, ballistic missile-related activities, and human rights abuses. Sanctions on these activities remain in effect and will be enforced. And we have been very clear with Iran and the other P5+1 members that any actions we take to counter these non-nuclear threats are not a violation of the JCPOA.

Most recently, on January 17, the United States designated three entities and eight individuals involved in supporting Iran's missile program. We will continue to vigorously enforce sanctions as we see activities of concern.

Question:

How many political prisoners have been arrested since the Administration's reconciliation with the Castro regime in Cuba?

Answer:

The U.S. government has serious concerns about the human rights situation in Cuba, although some activists say they feel more able to advocate for their rights since the policy change. For 2014, independent civil society groups documented 8,899 short-term detentions and 8,616 for 2015. Full-year numbers are not available for 2016, but there have been 2,555 short-term detentions as of February 29. At least two independent organizations estimate the government holds 60 to 70 longer-term political prisoners.

We regularly convey our concerns to the Cuban government, with whom we are rebuilding a relationship after more than 50 years of isolation. We also consult with our allies in the region, and raise the human rights situation in Cuba in international fora.

Our policy change has brought more public discourse on human rights, both in Cuba and the United States. We speak to many democracy and human rights activists on the island and with those who travel to the United States.

We call on the Cuban government to stop its tactic of using detentions to quell peaceful protest. We also urge the Cuban government to release political prisoners, to allow independent evaluation of conditions in Cuba by international observers, and to ratify international human rights instruments.

**Questions for the Record submitted to
Secretary of State John F. Kerry by
Representative William R. Keating
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 25, 2016**

Combating ISIL:

One of the priorities for the foreign affairs budget is providing programs and platforms needed to defeat terrorist networks such as ISIL.

Question:

While it is understandable that the Administration may not be able to specifically name areas or countries that are most vulnerable to ISIL expansion, can you explain how this budget request will help to strengthen areas around the world where ISIL does not currently have an official province, but could in the future – countries such as Bangladesh, Indonesia, Somalia, and Tunisia – so they are more resilient in withstanding this threat?

Answer:

Today's terrorism environment is complex, and we continue to focus on the threat both ISIL and al-Qaida pose to our homeland and to our partners around the globe. Through our comprehensive counterterrorism strategy, we pursue a range of tools to degrade, disrupt, and defeat ISIL and al-Qaida, including through strong counterterrorism partnerships, multilateral initiatives, military action, and other tools.

Having been the direct target of ISIL-affiliated attacks, Tunisia recognizes the threat of ISIL and is taking important steps to disrupt immediate threats and curb the flow of foreign fighters. U.S. and Tunisian security forces benefit from a close, cooperative relationship and we continue to work with various Tunisian units to build their counter terrorism capacity. We have provided Tunisia with more than \$250 million in security assistance to counter internal and regional threats.

While ISIL has not established a branch or affiliate in Somalia, al-Shabaab senior leaders reportedly view these overtures as a threat and continue to pursue, detain, and eliminate ISIL aspirants in Somalia. Our efforts to counter and degrade al-Shabaab and ISIL continue to require a regional capacity building effort on a range of issues. This includes securing porous East African air, land, and maritime borders that are vulnerable to terrorist movement; responding to terrorist incidents; and providing civilian law enforcement with the capacity to deter and detect terrorist activity and secure aviation infrastructure. We are also working to expand our support to counter terrorist financing and money laundering in Somalia and elsewhere in East Africa, to help stem the flow of funds to al-Shabaab and ISIL adherents who may seek resources from beyond Somalia.

In Indonesia, the budget request provides capacity building support to law enforcement to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks; increase information sharing on foreign terrorist fighters and other terrorism suspects with the United States; build prosecutorial and judicial capacity to successfully convict terrorist suspects; and supports work with civil society organizations to build their capacity to counter violent extremism. The request supports efforts that both counter

ISIL as well as other terrorist groups of concern located in Southeast Asia, including Jemaah Islamiya.

Bangladesh continues to face terrorism threats from transnational groups such as ISIL and al'Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). U.S. counterterrorism assistance seeks to strengthen Bangladesh's capacities in key areas including terrorism investigations, border security, aviation security, crisis response, critical infrastructure protection, and explosive detection and disposal. We also seek to help build Bangladesh's capacity to expand information sharing with the United States and other international partners. Finally, countering violent extremism (CVE) is a key programmatic focus and we seek to prioritize potentially "at risk" groups such as university students and regions vulnerable to radicalization to violence.

Humanitarian Assistance and Counter-terrorism:

The request for humanitarian assistance funding for FY2017 is \$1.2 billion below the FY2016 funding, as is similar funding for refugee programs. In addition to the obvious human rights and humanitarian concerns, research suggests that deteriorating conditions for refugee populations – such as weak security or inadequate shelter – are factors that can contribute to radicalization. We are currently trying to address incredible humanitarian crises as a result of the conflicts in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, Yemen, and elsewhere.

Question:

Why is the request for humanitarian assistance lower than last year and how does the Department plan to close that gap to ensure that the humanitarian conditions do not worsen in these areas?

Answer:

- Humanitarian assistance remains a top priority for the Administration. The United States continues to be the largest bilateral contributor of humanitarian assistance funding.
- The FY 2017 Request includes \$6.2 billion in humanitarian assistance, which is over \$500 million above the FY 2016 Request of \$5.7 billion.
- In concert with the significant resources provided by Congress in FY 2016, the funding included in the FY 2017 Request will help to meet humanitarian assistance needs globally over the next two years.

Women:

Increasingly, we are recognizing, both, how absent women have been in conflict resolution strategies across the globe, and also how critical their voices and participation are for shepherding violent and protracted conflicts to stable resolutions.

Question:

Could you expand on how the Department of State is addressing gender inequality across all aspects of foreign assistance programming and implementing commitments under the 2011 Women, Peace, and Security National Action Plan?

Answer:

The Department of State recognizes the influential role women can play in advancing international security, and is dedicated to supporting the United States' commitment to protect and empower women in countries threatened and affected by war and conflict, violence, and insecurity. Given the Department's leadership role in U.S. diplomatic engagement, foreign assistance programming, and robust relationships with civil society across the globe, the Department remains a key U.S. government implementer of the United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (NAP).

The President's FY 2017 budget request to advance women's empowerment and gender equality is \$1.3 billion, with programs spanning all sectors of U.S. foreign assistance. Roughly \$134 million is targeted at supporting the protection of women and girls in crisis- and conflict-affected environments, strengthening women's participation as political leaders, as well as their capacity as citizens to constructively engage their respective governments in key democratic processes, and contributing to community-based conflict mitigation efforts.

The Department's work to advance the NAP falls into several prominent areas, all of which can contribute to security and the ability of communities to withstand crisis and conflict. For example, the Department is:

- Pressing within every U.S.-involved peace process for the inclusion of women and advocating for the inclusion of women in senior positions related to conflict prevention and resolution at the UN;
- Expanding women's leadership and participation in public life and decision making about the future of their countries and communities;
- Building women's capacity as actors in conflict prevention and conflict-related decision-making by providing assistance to NGOs focused on women's participation and expanding on-the-ground support to women's peacebuilding organizations;
- Working to advance women's leadership in the security and justice sector—e.g. law enforcement, militaries, judiciaries—of partner nations;
- Enhancing responses to prevent and respond to sexual and gender based violence in conflict and crises, including in programming as well as for UN actors, peacekeepers, and partner militaries;
- Working to ensure all our humanitarian assistance in our post-conflict and disaster relief efforts is safely and equitably delivered to women and girls as well as men and boys – and that the NGOs and multilateral organizations on the ground respond to the specific protection needs of women and girls.

More broadly, the goal of gender equality and advancing the status of women and girls is explicitly addressed in policy development, strategic and budget planning, implementation of policies and programs, and monitoring and evaluation of results. This means going beyond simply ensuring a balanced approach to our diplomatic efforts, development assistance, and humanitarian aid to reducing gender gaps in resources, opportunities and outcomes in our

programs and the full range of our diplomatic engagement – with host governments, civil society, and the private sector – and public diplomacy efforts. In addition, this work encourages and increases women's direct participation through bilateral, regional, and multilateral diplomacy to ensure better outcomes for governments and society. The Department also engages on these issues throughout interagency processes, including Principals, Deputies, and Interagency Policy Committee meetings.

Economic Assistance:

Economic stability is a critical component of assisting countries in emerging from conflict and becoming more resilient to future threats.

Question:

Within the Department's strategies for bolstering economic stability and growth, can you speak to strategies to also strengthen the commercial laws of these countries as necessary so that U.S. economic assistance is most effective?

Answer:

Ambassadors and their economic teams at missions overseas routinely engage with their foreign government counterparts to encourage the introduction of or adjustment to legislation, regulations, and processes that strengthen the commercial laws of the country and level the playing field for U.S. companies to operate successfully. In addition, we work closely with other U.S. agencies to help foreign governments to strengthen commercial laws. The Department of Commerce's Commercial Law Development Program works with more than 50 countries to build transparent legal systems and fair regulations. Similarly, Treasury's Office of Technical Assistance provides advice and training in areas that strengthen the business environment, including revenue collection, developing sound banking systems, and combating corruption.

Human Rights vs Terrorism:

It is abundantly clear that the severity and quantity of violent conflicts and threat of violent extremism throughout the world today demands our attention. The FY2017 budget request seems to reflect that reality with increased funding for counterterrorism and similar programming. However, human rights and rule of law programming are critical for stabilizing areas against the spread of terrorist groups and ideologies.

Question:

Are we shifting resources away from these programs to focus on counterterrorism programming in a manner that could jeopardize our ability to strengthen institutions and combat these threats long-term?

Answer:

Counterterrorism efforts do not draw resources away from this Administration's strong, continuing support for the rule of law and human rights. Democratic governance that respects the rule of law and protects human rights is a core strategic goal of the United States not only because it reflects American ideals, but because we believe that, over the long term, it helps safeguard national security and foster prosperity. Countries with precarious justice institutions,

in which rights violations are tolerated, create an environment in which instability, violent extremism, and humanitarian crises can flourish. Robust democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) programming that develops the institutional capabilities of countries is critical to strengthening and expanding our efforts to prevent – rather than react to – the next political crisis, violent episode, human rights violation or mass atrocity. The Department of State and USAID's FY 2017 budget request for DRG programs is \$2.7 billion, of which \$765.2 million is requested specifically for rule of law and human rights programming, which is \$106.5 million (16 percent) above FY 2015.

DRG programs and counterterrorism, countering violent extremism (CVE), and security sector assistance are linked. The root causes of extremism are embedded in frustration with poor governance systems and restrictions on freedom of religion, assembly and expression and are often put into place in response to extremist threats. The FY 2017 Request includes \$186.7 million for CVE, which seeks to reduce the ability of violent extremists to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize followers to violence and to address specific factors that feed violent extremist recruitment and radicalization. Some of the more crucial factors include human rights abuses by security forces and rule of law grievances. The request also includes \$181.0 million for the Bureau for Counterterrorism (CT), which includes \$80.0 million for the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund (CTPF). Of the budget request for the CT Bureau, \$66.9 million contributes to CVE.

Many of our assistance efforts aimed at strengthening the capabilities of the security sector in developing countries also incorporate reforms of justice systems, bolster civilian oversight of the police and armed forces and in that way, and others, attempt to address human rights concerns. While security sector assistance does not replace the need for core DRG funding, some of it contributes to DRG objectives.

Counter-Extremism Narrative:

A significant focus in the foreign affairs budget includes countering extremist narratives.

Question:

With the DHS Office of Countering Violent Extremism and the new Center for Global Engagement also having certain capacities to address extremist narratives, how is the State Department collaborating with these two offices, the private sector through public-private partnerships, or other entities to combat extremist narratives?

Answer:

Our CVE efforts aim to reduce the ability of violent extremists to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize followers to violence and to address specific factors that feed violent extremist recruitment and radicalization. As we work to counter ISIL and other terrorist groups, it is not enough to defeat them militarily on the battlefield; we must also address the ideology and tactics these groups employ to attract new recruits and the underlying conditions that fuel radicalization to violence.

Consistent with what the Senate appropriators called for in the markup of their FY 2016 appropriations bill, the Counterterrorism Bureau will serve as the Department's liaison with the new domestic CVE Task Force based at the Department of Homeland Security. Through this coordination we will promote sharing of good practices and expertise, including research, across domestic and international CVE efforts.

The Department and USAID will utilize and integrate the U.S. government's various diplomatic, strategic communications, rule of law, and development resources and tools to pursue the following with respect to our international CVE efforts:

1. State and USAID will focus and expand diplomatic efforts with governmental, multilateral, and non-governmental actors to promote CVE cooperation and advance this strategy.

In conjunction with E.O. 13721, which established the interagency Global Engagement Center (GEC), State will work through its public affairs networks, functional bureaus (such as CT), and engagement abroad to promote CVE communications and U.S. strategic counterterrorism narratives. CT, the GEC and other State offices participate in a regular NSC working group on issues related to CT technology, including efforts to engage public and private sector partners to address the threat posed by violent extremist organizations. In coordination with CT and other bureaus, and the GEC also engages with a network of global partners, both non-governmental and governmental.

2. State and USAID, in coordination with our international partners, will expand and target rule of law and development programs to address specific drivers of violent extremism and enhance CVE partnerships. Resources will be focused on areas where they will have the greatest sustained impact, and programming will be guided by rigorous analysis of violent extremism drivers, but also seek to innovate and learn in order to ensure our toolkit is strong.

State and USAID will increase support for efforts to understand overall trends of violent extremism and to identify and analyze the local geography, demography, and drivers of recruitment and radicalization to violent extremism: where the hotspots are; where and with whom terrorists are focusing their efforts; who is most susceptible; and why they may be motivated to join.

**Question for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State John F. Kerry by
Representative Michael McCaul
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2016**

Question:

The U.S. led the charge in 2012 at the Child Survival Call to Action in building the global momentum around the goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths in a generation. But to reach that goal - we know that we must drastically improve how we fight undernutrition/malnutrition, as it is the underlying cause of 45% of deaths in children under the age of 5. When you have well-nourished children, other investments in every development sector improves outcomes. The health, education, and ultimately economic growth of a country rely on quality nutrition in a child's first thousand days to improve the health and prevent physical and cognitive stunting in its population.

We are aware that this August, the Brazilian government is hosting the second big global nutrition summit where world leaders will gather on the eve of the Olympics to announce commitments to end malnutrition in all its forms. At this Nutrition for Growth Summit, the U.S. has a leadership opportunity to again press forward the agenda for Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths, by announcing concrete and robust commitments for improving nutrition in women and children.

How is the U.S. planning to leverage the Nutrition for Growth Summit to ensure that the global community strengthens its commitment for saving lives and reducing stunting – two long standing initiatives of the U.S. government?

Answer:

Nutrition is a key priority for the State Department, particularly because of its positive impact on saving lives and improving economic growth. Reducing stunting is one of the topline objectives for Feed the Future and the 1,000 Days Partnership was born out of the State Department to bring attention and investment to the critical nutrition window from pregnancy to age two. Nutrition for Growth will be a key moment for the global nutrition community. We are very involved in ensuring the Summit will be a robust event that keeps the spotlight on nutrition and moves us closer to meeting the international goal we agreed to in the Sustainable Development Goals to end all forms of malnutrition. We are actively engaged with the host of Nutrition for Growth, the Government of Brazil, as well as other major stakeholders for the Summit, including the UK government, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. We are also engaging bilaterally with countries, particularly those with high burdens of malnutrition including Feed the Future countries, to encourage high levels of participation and strong commitments at the Summit.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
Representative David Cicilline
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2016**

Question:

I am very concerned about the deteriorating state of rule of law and adherence to human rights norms in Egypt. The Egyptian judiciary has long been rife with corruption and political agendas, but reports yesterday exemplify how bad the situation has become when a Cairo military court handed down a mass life sentence to 116 defendants that mistakenly included a three year old boy. This is outrageous and only exemplifies how little the Egyptian judiciary and security apparatus care for the rule of law. What are we doing about this? Additionally, in an appendix to this year's budget request, you ask Congress to remove Egypt's partial aid conditions, the accompanying national security waiver, and the reporting requirement entirely. What is the justification for proposing the removal of this language? What kind of signal will this send to the Egyptian government, and to the Egyptian people?

Answer:

We share your concerns about the deterioration of the human rights situation in Egypt. We continue to have frank discussions with Egyptian officials about the use of mass trials, the use of military courts to try civilians, arbitrary arrests and prolonged pre-trial detention. We have also expressed concern about increased restrictions on the exercise of freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, as well as harassment of NGOs.

We are increasing our public and private criticism of Egypt's human rights situation. We are engaging elements of the judiciary to provide training on human rights, including the use of physical evidence in criminal investigations. In FY 2014 we provided \$9,190,000 to support democratic institutions including \$4,698,000 on rule of law and human rights assistance.

The State Department has been clear about the need to maintain flexibility for our assistance to all countries around the world, and we are working with Congress in that regard. The Department remains seized with human rights concerns in Egypt, which will continue to be a focus of our engagement with the Egyptian government. We appreciate Congressional interest and cooperation on matters relating to Egypt and look forward to working with Congress.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State John F. Kerry by
Representative Ted Poe
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2016**

Question:

The State Department has no system in place to keep track of dollars spent on evaluation of foreign aid. It can tell how much it plans to spend in the future, but as soon as it spends money on evaluations, it has no way of tracking where it went. So the State Department can't tell us how many evaluations were done last year. Will the State Department start keeping track of how much money it spends on evaluations? If so, when?

Answer:

The State Department is updating its systems to better track dollars spent on evaluation of foreign aid by including evaluation as a program area in our standardized program structure and definitions (SPSD). The Department will be piloting the system this year and expects it to be fully integrated by calendar year 2017. The Department can report on the number of completed evaluations in a particular budget cycle or fiscal year. Through our reviews of the Evaluation Registry, in which bureaus report their evaluations, we are formalizing our follow-up on evaluations from planning through completion and can currently provide yearly numbers of completed evaluations.

Question:

Of the evaluations that State Department has done, they are a mixed bag when it comes to their quality. Some are high quality evaluations and some are low quality evaluations. It is unknown how much even the best evaluations are used after they are done- whether they inform future programs or just sit on a shelf. USAID recently completed a meta-evaluation or 'an evaluation of evaluations' looking at the quality of their evaluations and is currently carrying out another meta-evaluation looking at how much completed evaluations are used. Will the State Department do an evaluation of the quality and how its completed evaluations are used?

Answer:

In the Congressional Budget Justification for FY 2016, the State Department outlined its request for funding to perform a meta-evaluation on the quality of evaluations and their use. The Department is currently planning this evaluation. It will be contracted and performed with FY 2016 funds and completed in early 2017. The Department will be happy to brief on the results and our intended actions and will posting the evaluation publicly when it is complete.

Question:

When the State Department updated its Evaluation Policy in January 2015, it lowered the number of evaluations bureaus and independent offices have to do each year from 4 to 1. In a time when we are trying to bring more transparency and accountability to foreign aid, do you think requiring less evaluations per year is a step in the right direction?

Answer:

The number of evaluations required was not changed in the 2015 policy update. Under the 2012 policy, Bureaus were not required to complete four evaluations per year; the policy required two evaluations of each bureau to be completed between 2012 and 2014, or two evaluations within two years. The updated policy simply states one evaluation per year. We did this to counter the impression that the policy would not require that evaluations be done after 2014. This strengthened the requirement by making it clear that bureaus are permanently expected to conduct evaluations. Additionally, to promote greater transparency and accountability of our foreign assistance, starting in CY 2015 the Department began requiring that all foreign assistance evaluations be posted on the State Department's website, with the exception of those that are classified or highly sensitive. The Department now has more than 30 evaluations posted on www.state.gov/f/evaluations/, and adds more on a rolling basis as they are completed.

Question:

The Administration has taken a number of steps to make U.S. foreign assistance more transparent and thus, more effective. One of these is the creation of a public website managed by the State Department – ForeignAssistance.gov – where the taxpayer can review how and where the U.S. is spending foreign aid dollars. Every federal agency that provides foreign assistance funding is required to share its information on this website.

What is the agency participation rate for the site?

What agencies lag behind in sharing their data, and what is the reason for the delay in sharing this information with U.S. taxpayers?

What is the status of the State Department's own data on this site?

Answer:

ForeignAssistance.gov contains data from 10 of the 22 agencies with foreign assistance in their portfolios. These 10 agencies represent 98 percent of the U.S. foreign assistance portfolio. They include the Department of State; USAID; the Millennium Challenge Corporation; the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Health and Human Services, and the Treasury; the African Development Foundation; the Inter-American Foundation; and the Peace Corps.

The Department is engaged with all agencies and working to improve the quantity and quality of data reported by agencies. Despite some non-reporting to ForeignAssistance.gov, all agencies are reporting their aid data annually in the U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants (Greenbook) report. Progress is being made incrementally to improve the granularity and increase the frequency of reporting to ForeignAssistance.gov; however, there are a number of challenges to reporting including that agencies are often compiling and reconciling data from multiple systems that were not designed to collect or report on the detailed level of reporting currently requested. Most agencies cite the information required for ForeignAssistance.gov reporting is a manual, labor intensive effort requiring the collection of information across multiple systems, as well as some fields which are not contained in any systems. In addition, the

Department of State has been reporting this data to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standard since 2012.

The Department has made great progress in opening up and publishing its foreign assistance financial records, performance data, evaluations, and budget planning data over the last few years. In an effort to promote continual improvement, the Department has launched the Foreign Assistance Data Review. The full report is available online (<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/250931.pdf>). The results of this review will continue to drive the Department's cycle of continuous improvement.

Question:

The State Department is responsible for gathering data from all other U.S. Government agencies that conduct foreign assistance programs, and posting that information online. However, the quantity and quality of the data from two agencies in particular, the Department of Defense and the Department of Agriculture, seem to be lagging.

What steps are you taking to obtain better cooperation from DOD and USDA on sharing information about their foreign assistance programs?

Answer:

The Department of State is actively working with DOD and USDA to improve the quantity and quality of data. However, these agencies compile and reconcile data from multiple systems that were not designed to collect or report on foreign assistance in the detailed level of reporting currently requested. This is a common issue across reporting and non-reporting agencies. Additionally, all agencies face finite human and financial resources available to support this work. As such, other more urgent challenges are often prioritized. Domestic-focused agencies such as USDA also face challenges in parsing out foreign assistance records from domestic data.

We have worked closely with USDA and DOD to improve their data submissions. Their current leadership is engaged and driving improvements forward. Our team works hand-in-hand with both agencies to provide them technical assistance and assist our POCs in motivating their peers who are responsible for reporting the programs they manage. The data currently on the IATI registry for USDA and DOD is the most robust submission to date, and we expect to see continued strides.

Question:

I was disappointed that the State Department did not meet its international commitment to post its own foreign assistance data online by December 2015. Do you have a plan for the State Department to comply with this commitment? And would you please share it with the Committee?

Answer:

The Department of State has been reporting core data fields to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standard since 2012. While we are not reporting every one of the IATI fields, the Department has made great progress in opening up and publishing its foreign assistance financial records, performance data, evaluations, and budget planning data over the last few years.

To improve its IATI data reporting, the Department chartered a Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR) working group to understand and document issues related to managing and tracking foreign assistance within the Department and recommend a path forward. The first phase of the FADR produced a report that examines the current foreign assistance data environment and recommends improvements. The full report is available online (<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/250931.pdf>). The FADR group is continuing its work to carry out these recommendations.

Question:

The 2015 QDDR pledged that “The Department’s Bureau of Political-Military Affairs is developing a comprehensive approach to monitoring and evaluating security assistance.” Could you tell us what progress has been made towards evaluating the impact of our security assistance?

Answer:

Security assistance has been an instrument of foreign policy since after World War II. Supporting a small number of countries for much of that period, the size and scope has increased significantly since the end of the Cold War. The reasons why assistance may be provided to a country, and the expected outcomes of assistance, are varied and often complicated. As such, evaluating security assistance is not a simple matter.

In November 2014, PM hired a team of evaluation experts working on a number of issues that are central to making the evaluation of security assistance possible. First, they are developing an evaluation framework and logic model that will be used to trace the expected outcomes of security assistance, from the high level – a foreign policy perspective – to the more directly measurable (but by no means easier) impacts on partner country military capabilities. This work will set the stage for conducting test evaluations on several target country programs over the next year. The countries for pilot testing have not yet been identified, but Congressional interest will likely be one of the selection criteria. The team will complete the selection process this summer. Additionally, the team is developing a set of indicator data that will look at the environment in each country where we are providing assistance to help decision-makers ensure that activities are aligned with strategic goals.

Question:

Do you believe that the Department of Defense should be subject to the same reporting, monitoring and evaluation standards on security assistance that apply to the Department of State?

Answer:

Department of State fully supports the United States Policy on Security Sector Assistance (SSA), which directs all agencies engaged in SSA efforts to strengthen their own capacity to plan, synchronize, and implement security sector assistance through a whole-of-government process. The White House Fact Sheet on the U.S. Security Sector Assistance Policy delineates a specific guideline for the USG to inform policy with rigorous analysis, assessments, and evaluations. The fact sheet states, “The USG will introduce common standards and expectations for assessing security sector assistance requirements, in addition to investing in monitoring and evaluation of security assistance programs. Such standards will be aided by a requirement for measurable security sector assistance objectives, appropriate data collection of the impacts and

results of security sector assistance programs, and improved efforts to inform decision-making processes with data on what works and what does not work through impact evaluations when permissible.” Within this context, DoD, and all agencies engaged in SSA activities, are directed to adhere to strong reporting, monitoring, and evaluation standards, with the presumption that similar activities should be subject to similar standards, regardless of which Department is funding or carrying them out. Achieving the appropriate level of rigor in monitoring and evaluation will require time, effort, and resources, as well as a realistic trajectory for all security sector stakeholder Departments and Agencies. We are working closely with the Department of Defense on their monitoring and evaluation of security assistance and look forward to continued progress.

Question:

Mr. Secretary, earlier this month you approved the sale of 8 F-16s and relevant equipment to Pakistan at an estimated cost of over \$600 million. Pakistan has been hedging on both sides for years. During a February 2015 Congressional hearing, former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan James Cunningham testified that there has been no major progress in dealing with the flow of fertilizers or other bomb-making materials from Pakistan to Afghanistan used by terrorist groups. Have you received any assurances from the Pakistan government that Pakistan will use these jets to target the Haqqani Network? Are you convinced that Pakistan is no longer playing both sides and is fully committed to going after terrorists?

Answer:

The Administration supports the sale of eight F-16s to Pakistan because the F-16 is a demonstrated, effective platform to support Pakistan’s counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations. F-16s and other U.S.-provided equipment—such as air-to-ground munitions, reconnaissance equipment, and targeting pods—have enabled the Pakistani military to more effectively conduct operations against militants in its tribal regions at all hours while minimizing collateral damage. These operations reduce the ability of militants to use Pakistani territory as a safe haven for terrorism and a base of support for the insurgency in Afghanistan.

Terrorism has cost thousands of lives in Pakistan and the region. As part of Pakistan’s offensive, the Pakistan military has cleared Miram Shah and Mir Ali, which were known Haqqani Network safe havens. To date, the Haqqani Network has remained unable to return to these areas. That said, we remain concerned that the Haqqani Network has relocated to other areas of Pakistan, and it is clear that additional, specific, and deliberate action must be taken to curb the activities of the Haqqani Network, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, and other terrorist groups that threaten Pakistan’s neighbors as well as our interests. Pakistan says it will not discriminate among terrorist groups as part of its counterterrorism operations, and we continue to look to Pakistan to uphold this commitment, emphasizing the necessity of these efforts at the most senior levels of government on a consistent basis.

There has been progress over the past few years with regard to the flow of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and IED precursors from or through Pakistan into Afghanistan. The Joint Improvised-Threat Defeat Organization (JIDO – formerly JIDA) has a task force dedicated to assisting Pakistan in tracking and degrading the flow of IED material from Pakistan into Afghanistan. They assess that measures taken by the Government of Pakistan and Pakistani industry are decreasing the amount of homemade explosives available to the Afghan insurgency,

increasing the cost of IED components, and forcing the insurgency to extend its supply line deeper into Pakistan making it vulnerable to interdiction efforts.

More specifically, there are indications the insurgency is struggling to obtain Calcium Ammonium Nitrate (CAN) fertilizer and other IED precursors. The lack of availability of CAN is likely linked to the voluntary ban of sales in Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by Pakistan's sole producer, PakArab Fertilizer/Fatima Group. Additionally, Pakistan's raids on suspected safe houses and cache sites in Chaman and Quetta have removed more than one million kilograms of bulk explosives and precursor material from the insurgent supply chain. Pakistan Customs also has made substantial seizures of fertilizer, using tools and techniques it has developed through Project Global Shield in coordination with the Department of Homeland Security. There is still room for continued progress; in February of 2016, Pakistan Army's Counter-IED Organization reported that the use of commercial grade explosives increased in 2015. We continue to work with the Government of Pakistan on strengthening counter-IED laws and institutions, and Pakistan has expressed a consistent willingness to work with us and with the Government of Afghanistan on this shared challenge.

Question:

In 2006, there was a similar sale of F-16s to Pakistan by the United States, except that transaction did not use taxpayer funding but rather Pakistan national funds. At the very least it does not seem right that US taxpayers should be on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars to give F-16s to Pakistan. Do you think U.S. taxpayers should have to pay for Pakistan getting any of our F-16s? Are you aware the Pakistani F-16s nearly fired at U.S. helicopters involved in the raid that killed Osama bin Laden in 2011?

Answer:

As always, we are committed to working with Congress to deliver security assistance to our partners and allies that furthers U.S. foreign policy interests by building capacity to meet shared security challenges. Pakistan uses U.S.-funded equipment to significant effect in their ongoing counterterrorism efforts, which support U.S. counterterrorism objectives and contribute directly to stability and security in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. Since selling the F-16s to Pakistan in 2006, we have seen tangible evidence of the important role they have played in COIN and CT operations. In addition, previous mid-life upgrades of Pakistan's existing F-16s, targeting pods and surveillance equipment, and associated air-to-ground munitions were partially funded through security assistance, and Pakistan has used this equipment to great effect in recent operations, operations that directly further U.S. strategic interests in the region. U.S. troops in Afghanistan and our interests in the region are better served when Pakistan is able to continually apply pressure to terrorist groups residing within its borders – F-16s enable them to provide that continual pressure through COIN and CT operations.

The operational details of the U.S. raid that killed Osama bin Laden in 2011 remain classified, but Pakistan has a number of platforms, including the F-16s, for air defense purposes, to include the interception of unidentified aircraft that enter their airspace.

Question:

Mr. Secretary, can you please explain why the State Department chose to make a public statement last month in support of the European Union's move to distinguish products imported from the West Bank from those imported from Israel? When Israelis have been under attack

since the fall in nearly daily terrorist attacks throughout the country, do you believe this is the right time to make such statements that distance us from our staunchest Middle Eastern ally? Can you also clarify your statement on Oct. 13, 2015 at Harvard that implied that Israeli settlement activity is the cause of terrorism against Israelis? Isn't that the same as justifying the 9/11 attacks as a response to U.S. foreign policy?

Answer:

In response to a question about the European Union's (EU) labeling policy during the daily press briefing, we reaffirmed our steadfast opposition to boycotts of Israel. However, we do not believe that labeling the origin of products is equivalent to a boycott. The EU has made clear that this policy is not a boycott, and like us, the EU has made clear that they oppose boycotts against Israel.

In my statements at Harvard in October, I strongly condemned terrorist attacks against Israelis. There is no justification for this hateful violence, and I have consistently called on the Palestinians to condemn the attacks. Any efforts to glorify these types of attacks or incite violence are absolutely unacceptable. I talked about the challenges posed on both sides by the absence of progress towards a two-state solution. I also highlighted the U.S. concern that current trends on the ground, including continued acts of violence as well as ongoing settlement activity, are dangerously imperiling the viability of a two state solution.

Question:

During Rouhani's tenure about 2,300 people have been executed. Those executed included among others political activists, ethnic and religious minorities and even people have been executed charged with "waging war on God" but the Department of State has hardly condemned these crimes. Why are we silent? When was the last time as Secretary of State you issued any statement about human rights violations in Iran?

Answer:

We remain deeply concerned by Iran's human rights record, including a substantial uptick in executions without fair trials, involving juvenile offenders, and for crimes that do not meet the threshold of most serious crimes. As we said on March 14 at the Interactive Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, "Iran's continued execution of individuals for crimes allegedly committed as juveniles and prolonged arbitrary detention of individuals for the exercise of their human rights and fundamental freedoms are unacceptable." We continue to speak out regarding Iran's human rights violations as well as maintain sanctions relating to human rights abuses.


We routinely address human rights issues in Iran publicly. On February 14, we issued a statement condemning the ongoing house arrest of prisoners of conscience Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi, as well as Mousavi's wife, women's rights advocate Zahra Rahnavard, and called for their immediate release. On August 7, 2015, the Department called on the Iranian Government to rescind the death sentence against Mohammed Ali Taheri, who was convicted of "corruption on earth" for founding a spiritual movement; Taheri's death sentence was later commuted.

We document these and other human rights abuses in the International Religious Freedom, Human Rights, and Trafficking in Persons reports. Iran is designated as a "Country of Particular Concern" under the International Religious Freedom Act and a Trafficking in Persons

Tier 3 country. The Department has also highlighted over 70 cases of Iranian political prisoners through our Virtual Embassy Tehran platforms, which we broadcast across social media platforms.

In addition to our own public statements, highlighting Iran's abuses in international forums is a critical method to bring pressure to bear on Iran to change its human rights record. We continue to support the renewal of the Special Rapporteur's mandate to continue his important work highlighting the human rights abuses committed in Iran. We also strongly support the annual UN General Assembly resolution on human rights in Iran, which stresses the international community's serious concern regarding the "alarming high frequency" of Iran's use of the death penalty, in disregard of internationally recognized safeguards and for crimes that do not rise to the "most serious crime" threshold.

We will continue to work closely with Congress and the international community to address our concerns with Iran's human rights record, and will continue to raise our voice in support of the Iranian people and their desire for greater respect for human rights and the rule of law.



**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
Representative Brendan F. Boyle
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2016**

Question:

This April marks two great events in world history: the centennial of the 1916 Easter Rising and the 18th anniversary of a great foreign policy achievement, the Good Friday Agreement. I was pleased to see the announcement in November that an agreement among the British and Irish governments was reached to overcome the various crises over the past two years that had stalled political progress in Northern Ireland. I thank you and Senator Gary Hart for the deep engagement the United States has shown in support of peace and prosperity. However, I was disappointed to see that “legacy issues” was not addressed in the agreement. What is the status of these talks? Last year additional shocking revelations of British collusion were uncovered that cannot be ignored and must be investigated. I do not believe Ireland or the UK can fully move forward until issues of the past are addressed.

Answer:

The U.S. government has actively re-engaged in the Northern Ireland peace process over the past two years, responding to troubling spikes in violence that risked derailing the progress made since the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. Since Summer 2014, my Personal Representative, Senator Gary Hart, has worked with the UK, Ireland, and Northern Ireland leaders to help bring comprehensive talks to fruition – first in the December 2014 Stormont House Agreement and then in the November 2015 Fresh Start Agreement.

The Fresh Start Agreement not only resolved difficult budgetary issues and developed a framework for countering paramilitaries, but also helped strengthen Northern Ireland’s devolved government and safeguard the important gains made in the Stormont House Agreement. We are urging the UK, Ireland, and the Northern Ireland Executive to implement the Fresh Start and Stormont House agreements as fully and swiftly as possible.

In particular, we continue to encourage the UK, Ireland, and Northern Ireland’s political leaders to deal effectively with the past by creating the institutions set out in the Stormont House Agreement – the Historical Investigations Unit, Independent Commission on Information Retrieval, Oral History Archive, and Implementation and Reconciliation Group. Northern Ireland Victims Commissioner Judith Thompson, a strong advocate for swift establishment of the institutions, publicly stated she believes it will be possible to secure a “workable deal” after Northern Ireland’s May 5 Assembly elections.

Question:

At what point do we move beyond Minsk? And when do we make good on our promise to not simply keep sanctions on Russia in place, but to increase the cost of Vladimir Putin’s destabilizing aggression in Ukraine?

Answer:

We continue to believe that the Minsk agreements are the best and only way to achieve peace in eastern Ukraine.

Recently, we have intensified our diplomacy to support efforts to support discussions in the Normandy format to resolve the conflict. President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and other senior U.S. officials continue to reinforce to Russia that Moscow must fully implement its Minsk commitments, including a durable ceasefire and full access for the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission. We also continually discuss with the Normandy powers how we can best support their efforts.

We have also been very clear with Moscow that sanctions will remain in place until Russia fully implements Minsk and returns Crimea to Ukraine. We are prepared to increase costs on Russia if it take new aggressive actions in Ukraine.

Question:

To what extent are we targeting our Central America funding to the proper communities in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras?

Answer:

The U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America addresses the underlying conditions driving migration from the region through an integrated approach that focuses on prosperity, governance, and security. However, migration is only a symptom of the problems Central America faces that directly affect U.S. interests. The Department and USAID, in cooperation with the Northern Triangle governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras work directly in communities that generate outbound migration.

For example, in El Salvador, the Department and USAID work in the ten most-violent municipalities, home to 70 percent of homicides nation-wide, as identified by the Government of El Salvador. In Guatemala, the Department is expanding the Model Police Precinct program into the Western Highlands communities – a primary source location of migration – to improve law enforcement, develop community policing, and conduct crime prevention programs particularly with at-risk youth. In Honduras, through the Central America Regional Security Initiative, the Department and USAID are supporting the place based strategy in San Pedro Sula, which has some of Honduras' highest homicide rates and is a primary source of migration. Nevertheless, to address the challenges Central America faces, we also work in other communities that, while facing less violence, face weak governance, lack of economic opportunity, and insecurity.

Question:

Have we eliminated any USAID, INL and other programs in these countries that do not meet our main foreign policy objective of ensuring that children are not forced to make the perilous trek from Central America to the United States?

Answer:

Although the Department and USAID have not entirely eliminated Central America programs under the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America, we have redirected funding for some programs and activities to better align with the Strategy. For example, in Guatemala, the Department suspended its corrections reform program in 2014, but has since been able to reengage with the new administration and resumed our corrections support program.

USAID no longer capitalizes microfinance institutions as its main approach to developing the medium-, small-, and micro-enterprise sector. Based on expert research from the Inter-American Development Bank and others, USAID focuses resources on developing partnership

and risk mitigation tools to incentivize local banks to expand productive loans and other financing directly to small businesses.

While we have made investments in Central America in security, we need to expand successful security programming as well as make new and deeper investments in prosperity and governance to achieve national-level impact. The \$750 million FY 2017 request is needed in Central America to address the economic, governance, and security drivers of migration from the region. We urge Congress to fully fund the request.

Most U.S. assistance to Central America supports the Strategy. However, the Administration continues to allocate funding for the Global Health Initiative in Central America, which is a priority separate from the Strategy.

Question:

Are we providing funding to help reintegrate children into their communities who are sent back from the United States or Mexico?

Answer:

USAID provided the International Organization for Migration (IOM) a \$7.6 million grant to assist the Northern Triangle governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras improve their capacity to receive and reintegrate unaccompanied children and families returned from the United States and Mexico. The USAID project supports the Northern Triangle governments to improve conditions at shelters for returning families and unaccompanied children; provide medical and psychosocial assistance for returning families and unaccompanied children; train government agencies responsible for children's and family services; distribute hygiene kits, phone cards, and transportation assistance to returnees; link returning unaccompanied children and families to community resources; and create a community response map to amplify government outreach to returnees and potential migrants in key communities. From September 2014 to December 2015, the project assisted more than 35,000 children and family units.

Question:

I understand that as we come toward the expiration of the MOU, the Administration is renegotiating the terms with Israel. What is the status of the renegotiation?

Answer:

Our commitment to Israel's security is steadfast, and our close cooperation with the Israeli government on military and security issues continues. As Prime Minister Netanyahu recognized during his 2015 speech to the UN General Assembly, "we never forget that the most important partner that Israel has always been, and will always be, the United States of America."

Israel remains the leading recipient worldwide of U.S. Foreign Military Financing (FMF). The current ten-year \$30 billion Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. and Israel, under which Israel currently receives \$3.1 billion per year, is just one example of our strong, enduring partnership and the U.S. commitment to Israel's security.

During their meeting on November 9, 2015, the President and Prime Minister Netanyahu agreed to resume formal talks on a new MOU to succeed the current one, which expires at the end of Fiscal Year 2018. Several rounds of talks with the Israelis have been held since then. We hope to reach a new MOU that will build on the United States' historic and enduring commitment to Israel's security, provide maximum benefit to both Israel and the United States

and serve as the foundation for the bilateral security relationship well through the next decade. Even as we grapple with a particularly challenging budget environment, this Administration's commitment to Israel's security is such that we are prepared to sign an MOU with Israel that would constitute the largest single pledge of military assistance to any country in U.S. history.

Question:

What does Israel need in light of new threats to its security?

Answer:

Our commitment to Israel's security is steadfast, and our close cooperation with the Israeli government on military and security issues continues. We consult closely with the Israeli government to determine how we may best support them in defending against emerging threats.

Israel remains the leading recipient worldwide of U.S. Foreign Military Financing (FMF). The current ten-year \$30 billion Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. and Israel, under which Israel currently receives \$3.1 billion per year, is just one example of our strong, enduring partnership and the U.S. commitment to Israel's security.

The United States also provides Israel with access to highly sophisticated equipment to ensure its security, including the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. With deliveries starting in late 2016, Israel will be the only country in the region with a fifth generation U.S. fighter aircraft. We will continue to work with Israel to identify the best equipment to meet its security needs.

Under President Obama's leadership, the United States has invested approximately \$23 billion in FMF assistance in Israel, and over \$3 billion in the Iron Dome, David's Sling, and Arrow 3 missile defense systems. Since 2011, the United States has provided Israel with over \$1.3 billion for the Iron Dome system alone.

In FY 2016 Israel will receive an additional \$487 million in missile defense support, including \$55 million for Iron Dome. After successful joint tests of David's Sling and Arrow 3 in December 2015, in FY16 the United States will fund coproduction and procurement of these systems for the first time – further deepening our missile defense cooperation with Israel.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
Congressman Matt Salmon
House Foreign Relations Committee
February 25, 2016**

Question 1(a):

On January 6, 2016, North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test, the third since President Obama took office. On February 6, North Korea conducted another long-range missile test. In light of these latest provocations, how is the Administration changing its policy of “strategic patience”?

Answer:

In response to the DPRK’s recent actions, the United States and China have successfully negotiated United Nations Security Council resolution 2270 which imposes new, stricter sanctions on North Korea in response to Pyongyang’s latest violations of previous resolutions.

The United States is actively engaged with countries around the world—including China—to effectively and vigorously enforce the new sanctions aimed at sending a strong message to North Korea to alter their strategic calculus in regards to the development of nuclear weapons. We are also coordinating with regional allies Japan and South Korea.

Question 1(b):

What steps will the Administration take to push China to do more on North Korea?

Answer:

The United States and China agree on the fundamental importance of a denuclearized North Korea, and we welcomed China’s agreement on the strongest sanctions the Security Council has imposed in a generation. The UNSCR has monitoring and transparency mechanisms that are unprecedented in the DPRK UN sanctions regime. We will continue to urge China to do more – including when President Xi travels to Washington later this month for the Nuclear Security Summit – until we see concrete signs that the DPRK leaders have come to the realization that the only viable path forward for their country is denuclearization.

Question:

September 2015 marked the first-ever U.S.-India Strategic and Commercial Dialogue (S&CD), held in Washington, DC. The S&CD exemplifies the deepening partnership between the United States and India and demonstrates U.S. commitment to India’s success and leadership in the Asia-Pacific region. However, one of the best ways we can assist India in assuming a leadership role in the region is to encourage and facilitate India’s trade industry and membership in important international organizations. Does the Administration support India’s membership in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation? What other U.S.-led initiatives exist to facilitate India’s growing role in the region?

Answer:

India has substantial and growing economic linkages with the United States and other APEC member economies. We welcome India’s interest in joining the Asia Pacific Economic

Cooperation forum and look forward to gaining a better understanding of India's interest in membership and how APEC fits into India's domestic economic reform agenda. There is currently no consensus among APEC members on the parameters of membership expansion or on which of the roughly dozen candidates, including India as well as other countries in the Americas and South and Southeast Asia, should be considered.

In 2015, President Obama and Prime Minister Modi announced the U.S.-India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean region that builds on the complementarity of the U.S. Asia Rebalance and India's Act East initiatives and our shared commitment to a rules-based international order to promote regional security and prosperity. The U.S. Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor (IPEC) initiative supports greater regional economic connectivity between South and Southeast Asia in an effort to promote greater prosperity and security in the region, and offer commercial opportunities for U.S. business. The United States is implementing programs that promote regional engagement in four areas: creating a regional energy market; facilitating trade and transportation; streamlining customs and border procedures; and fostering people-to-people ties. India is an important partner in these programs. We are improving regional connectivity through the U.S. – India – Japan Ministerial mechanism and the trilateral joint working group.

Question:

How will the Administration respond to recent Chinese actions in the South China Sea, especially in light of President Xi Jinping's statement during his U.S. State visit to not militarize islands in the South China Sea? What types of strategic signals will the United States send back to China?

Answer:

China's military deployments and attempts to advance its claims over disputed areas are inconsistent with the aspirations of the region for peace and stability, as was well expressed in the Sunnylands Declaration with ASEAN last month. As the President has said, we have a strong national interest in the peaceful resolution of disputes without use or threat of force, as well as in unimpeded lawful commerce and compliance with international law, including freedom of navigation, freedom of overflight, and other lawful uses of the sea. China's actions undermine these principles, and we are responding with resolve. On the diplomatic front, we remain active in the region, together with our treaty allies and regional partners, in building stronger regional institutions, increasing understanding of relevant international law, and in rallying support for these principles. On the security front, we are strengthening the capacity of our partners to enhance maritime domain awareness. We also will continue to conduct Freedom of Navigation Operations – or FONOPs – to challenge excessive maritime claims that are inconsistent with international law. We will continue to defend, in coordination with the region, the rules-based international order, which has for many years been the wellspring of the Asia-Pacific's peace and prosperity.

Question:

The disappearance of five individuals affiliated with Mighty Current publishing house and Causeway Bay Bookstore—Lui Bo, Cheung Jiping, Gui Minhui, Lam Wingkei, and Lee Bo—who are either European citizens or Hong Kong residents has been incredibly concerning. Their emerging in China to partake in an "investigation" is not a convincing justification for their

disappearance. I am worried about the erosion of the principle of “One Country, Two Systems” between Hong Kong and mainland China, and the gradual erosion of civil liberties of Hong Kong residents. What steps is the Administration pursuing to address the disappearances? How should U.S. policy change to adapt to these circumstances?

Answer:

The United States is deeply concerned about the disappearances of five individuals associated with Mighty Current Media and the Causeway Bay Bookstore and the February 28 airing by Chinese local media of purported confessions by four of them prior to any indictment or judicial process. Such confessions run counter to the standards of a society based on the rule of law. These cases, which include two individuals holding foreign passports who disappeared from Hong Kong and Thailand, raise serious questions about China’s commitment to Hong Kong’s autonomy under the “one country, two systems” framework enshrined in the Basic Law, as well as its respect for international law. We have raised our detailed concerns privately with Chinese authorities as well as publicly, and will continue to do so. On March 10, the United States and eleven likeminded countries joined together at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva to deliver a joint statement criticizing these disappearances as well as the broader deterioration in China’s human rights situation.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
Representative Scott Perry
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2016**

Question:

Mr. Secretary, in the aftermath of the attacks on Benghazi the Department invested over \$25M to successfully blast-test and certify hardened modular structures to protect U.S. embassy and consulate personnel in dangerous locations from violent attacks. It is my understanding that after a brief period of procuring increased quantities of these certified life-saving shelters, the Department has not let a competitive solicitation for this security product since January 2014. Given the increasingly dangerous environment in which our diplomats operate, can you explain why there has been an extended pause in the Department's procurement of these hardened shelters?

Answer:

The Department needed a significant quantity of hardened alternative trailer systems (HATS) to prepare for contingency operations, some of which have yet to develop. As these units are durable, reusable and non-expendable, a sufficient quantity remains within our current inventory to meet our near-term needs.

Question:

It is my understanding that in order to meet the Department's demand for up to 600 hardened shelters, up to 8 licensees were selected to competitively bid on production. Has demand for these blast-proof products changed? If so, what circumstances or factors led to the decreased demand?

Answer:

The Department's preferred method of providing ballistic and blast resistant protection for our missions overseas is through the construction of permanent, hardened structures. While security conditions around the world are constantly evolving, our commitment to providing long-term safe and secure working environments remains constant. Wherever possible, the Department will install permanent facilities and retain the use of our stock of hardened alternative trailer systems (HATS) for developing contingencies. At some point, if our stock of HATS has been depleted and additional needs are anticipated, procurement for additional units would begin.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State John F. Kerry by
Representative David Trott
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2016**

Question:

Please describe programs funded under the President's foreign affairs budget for fiscal year 2017 that will advance political reconciliation among Iraq's heavily divided ethnic and religious groups.

Answer:

The Department is focused on assisting the government of Iraq's efforts to affect political reconciliation between Iraq's disparate groups. Reconciliation is the best means of ensuring a lasting defeat of Da'esh. To that end, the President's request includes resources for decentralization, stabilization, and programs centered on reconciliation at the local level.

Decentralization led by Iraqi leaders and legislated by the Iraqi parliament is designed to shift responsibility and resources to provincial governments that are better able to identify and respond to local needs and priorities. This has the potential to empower Iraq's ethnic and religious groups who are more influential with their provincial and local governments and will be better positioned to have their priorities fulfilled. U.S. resources for stabilization will continue to provide the United Nations Development Program with resources to assist the government of Iraq in developing and executing plans to restore essential services in areas retaken from Da'esh. Stabilization, with the goal of promoting reconciliation, earning the trust of disaffected Iraqis, and enabling the voluntary return of internally displaced persons in Iraq once it is safe to do so, is crucial to building trust with Sunnis and other communities. Moreover, the United States will also provide resources to continue critical reconciliation and stabilization efforts at the local level, to be implemented by civil society organizations and within local communities, to complement national level efforts and ensure greater sustainability of such efforts.

Question:

Following the liberation of Daesh controlled areas, please describe initiatives that will be funded to advance an inclusive government on the local level.

Answer:

The Department of State and USAID are prepared to support a variety of local governance initiatives in liberated areas of Syria through our regional assistance platforms based in Turkey and Jordan: the Syria Transition Assistance Response Team and the Southern Syria Assistance Platform, respectively. Both platforms will continue to support inclusive local governance in opposition-controlled areas across Syria, bolstering civil society's efforts to promote representative, accountable governance and working through local civilian partners to provide comprehensive packages of assistance that include: equipment and training for local municipal bodies, cash stipends for municipal workers, support for community security, and sub-grants for local essential service projects. Since 2012, the U.S. has trained over 3,000 local councilmembers and activists, helped retain over 20,000 Syrian civil servants in opposition-controlled areas and assisted over 400 local and provincial councils. We anticipate it will take

time for local governance to take shape following liberation, as we saw in northwest Syria, given the prominence of explosive remnants of war and the reluctance of internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their communities while Daesh remains in relatively close proximity. To meet their more immediate needs, we plan to help civil society provide small, targeted services to their communities, as activists tend to return home relatively quickly. We also plan to extend stabilization support that is targeted to specific areas liberated from Da'esh control when inclusive local councils take shape.

Question:

Minority communities have often questioned the impact of aid disbursement on the ground based off of existing aid delivery mechanisms. What initiatives are being undertaken under the FY 2017 budget request that promote the inclusion of minority communities to administer and provide financial oversight on the delivery of aid to their local communities?

Answer:

The U.S. Department of State and USAID work closely with partners to ensure that our assistance is reaching the intended beneficiaries. We exercise considerable oversight over our programs, and our partners utilize a variety of multi-layered monitoring and tracking mechanisms to make sure that our assistance gets to those it is intended to reach.

The Fiscal Year 2017 budget request will help the U.S. Government to respond effectively and efficiently to emergency situations, including food insecurity, by using the right tools at the right times with a range of interventions, including local and regional purchase of agricultural commodities, food vouchers, cash transfers, and cash for work programs. Flexibility in determining the right approach for the conditions on the ground is critical for funding to have the intended impact and take into account the needs and preferences of affected populations.

USAID works closely with all partners, including minority communities, to collect performance and situational data to monitor activities and gather enough information to verify assistance is reaching intended target areas and beneficiaries. USAID requires partners to monitor and report on their programs using a variety of approaches, depending on their appropriateness in specific circumstances. These approaches may include geo-tagged photos and videos of the distributions, multiple independent field monitors, and feedback through hotlines for beneficiaries.

Both USAID field based and Washington staff monitor programs and these field visits are a core part of USAID monitoring and program learning undertaken in more stable environments. USAID also utilizes a third-party monitoring system to verify and provide independent confirmation of a number of USAID programs. By providing regular independent, field-based monitoring of activities and verification of outputs, third party mechanisms supply USAID an added level of assurance especially in areas of conflict and crisis.

Question:

According to United Nations reporting, an estimated 3,500 women and children are currently being held as slaves by Islamic militants. What programs are being funded to provide the Iraqi government with tools to document and provide reports of the missing victims as well as providing counseling and other psycho-social services?

Answer:

The U.S. government, in coordination with Coalition partners, provides vital assistance to returned captives and other vulnerable internally displaced persons (IDPs), including through gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, livelihoods assistance, psychosocial support and building prospects for accountability for GBV crimes. While the needs are overwhelming and far outweigh the ability of any single government response, the United States is contributing to the global effort to protect, rehabilitate and empower women and girls as a bulwark in the fight against Da'esh.

For example, the Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) is working through its Transitional Justice Global Initiative to implement a \$1.6 million project that enables Iraqi civil society to document human rights abuses committed by Da'esh and other actors in Iraq. This program establishes protocols and a repository that collects, organizes, preserves, and analyzes evidence gathered to serve a wide range of future transitional justice purposes. Further, the program connects local documentation efforts with the Iraqi judiciary and traditional justice practices. DRL has also been implementing grants to civil society organizations, both Iraqi and international, to advocate with the government of Iraq for greater support for the families of missing persons.

USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) provide humanitarian relief to vulnerable Iraqis, including GBV survivors via implementing partners, including local community-based organizations and international organizations. This support includes medical and psycho-social assistance, support to women's and girl's centers, distribution of dignity kits, provision of group-based support to women and girls, and targeted case management services to help GBV survivors and those at risk of GBV.